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THE ENEMY'S AGENDA

IN his speech to the House on Tuesday Mr. Churchill faced at least some of the facts: he minimised neither the losses we have suffered, nor the dangers yet to come. Because he tells us the truth when it is unpalatable, we believe him when he sums up the achievements of the Air Force and the Fleet and measures our growing strength. He assumes courage and intelligence in the people that chose him as its leader: he will get what he expects. All that he had to tell us about the Government's intentions, whether he dealt with the provision of shelters or insurance against the destruction of buildings, was in the right tone. What he had to say about Sir John Anderson's critics was not so happily inspired. Loyalty to a colleague who has signally failed may be a generous trait, but it can be carried to a point which causes dismay and bewilderment.

To our knowledge of the present phase of the war and the future prospect, Mr. Churchill added little. A Prime Minister dare not guess in public, though in his own mind he must be speculating with all the powers of his trained and experienced imagination. Though we dare not assume that the danger of invasion is past, it is reasonably certain that the enemy will use the winter to concentrate his attack in the genial climate of the Mediterranean. We all understand the precarious situation which the desertion of France made for us there. Mr. Churchill reminded us that our command of the middle sea has enabled us to throw fresh forces into Egypt, and we note that he included in them the Egyptians, who still delay their declaration of war. The desert is a formidable obstacle in the Italian's path. It is possible that German troops may try to evade our ships to reinforce him. In return, there is a threat that Italian bombers will reinforce the Germans in their battering of this island. But so long as our Fleet dominates these waters, what we may have to expect is rather such movements as the Axis can carry out on land. Some experts believe that the German occupation of Rumania may be a prelude to a southward march upon the Dardanelles and into Asia Minor. That is conceivable, but it would be an incredibly rash adventure, unless the Turks and Greeks allowed themselves to be paralysed and opened their doors undefended. The French have not yet yielded to the demands of the Axis for the demilitarisation of Syria, and they may grow firmer. But by far the easier of the two possible southward marches would be through Spain upon Gibraltar. Mr. Churchill obviously had this in mind when in a rather subtle passage he assured the Spaniards that we have no wish to starve them. This may have been a hint that we could do it, if they let the Germans through. But the Spaniards who would have resisted are in Franco's prisons or in Mexico. Fascist Spain, which dreams in abject poverty amid its ruins of a revival of the Spanish Empire, will certainly not resist the Germans, if they march down upon Gibraltar. On the other hand, it can do little to help them.

It is this possibility that made the failure of General de Gaulle's expedition to Dakar so regrettable. Had it succeeded, all French North Africa might have been roused to resist the Spaniards and Germans. Mr. Churchill lifted only a corner of the curtain that conceals this mystery, when he told us that it was by a series of accidents and errors that six of the Vichy Government's ships were allowed to slip past Gibraltar and that they turned the scale against Free France, when they reached Dakar. He did not make it at all clear who was responsible. But if the men who made this mistake have been disciplined, how came it that three more of Vichy's destroyers were allowed to pass the Straits last week? M. Baudouin has been talking about "the loyalty France owes to her conquerors." This abject government deserves no consideration from us.

In the week that has elapsed since Japan joined the Axis in a Triple Alliance, it has become clear that this threat will not intimidate America. On the contrary, her answer has been an embargo on some warlike exports, which is timed, whether by accident or intention, to coincide with the re-opening of the Burma road, which Mr. Churchill announced. Canada has promptly followed her by stopping her exports of minerals to Japan. Unless that Power has improbably big reserves, the stoppage of her supplies, which may soon be general, may lead her to act promptly. Her occupation of the little island leased to us off Wei-hai-Wai is technically, if such niceties weighed with us, an act of war. That the Americans expect her to become a belligerent before long is clear, since they are urging their citizens to leave Japan while they can. Our own guess is that the plans of

the Axis for this winter may include a concerted and possibly simultaneous attack on three of our vital positions, Gibraltar, Alexandria and Singapore. It may have been rather with that in view than as a threat to China that the Japanese occupied French Indo-China.

One may doubt whether Japan's armed power can carry the load of her ambitions, but our enemies have certainly compiled a formidable agenda for this winter. If we face it with fortitude, this is partly because we have tested our own strength this autumn, but it is also because we sense the intimacy and generosity of American friendship. If the third enemy should come into the open against us, no one doubts that America will fight at our side as our ally. Against that alliance Hitler would know that he could not be victorious.

The Occupation of Rumania

That the Germans are carrying out a military occupation of Rumania is reasonably certain: why they are doing it, we are left to guess. The fact seems to be that a mechanised division, say, 15,000 men, is on its way, and it is said that two more will follow it. It passed through Hungary and by so doing made an end of that country's always dubious neutrality. The explanations offered are: (1) that it is going to instruct the Rumanian Army, and (2) that it will protect the oil wells against the sabotage which British subjects are accused of organising. We do not doubt that the army of this ill-governed State is as inefficient and corrupt as its civilian services. Certainly it needs instruction and cleansing; but for such a purpose one would send officers and sergeants and not a whole mechanised division. With sabotage, again, a few hundred policemen could cope. A third explanation is that we might try to put the wells out of action by bombing them, presumably from Palestine or Cyprus. The answer to that fear would be to despatch fighter planes and A.A. batteries, but not a complete mechanised division. A force of this kind must be destined for some larger purpose. Is it a strategical reserve, designed to act as future necessity may dictate? Is it meant to warn the Russians against any attempt to extend from the Danube along the Black Sea coast? Or is it aimed chiefly at the Turks, in case they should help the Greeks against any future threats or attacks from Italy? In any event we should be justified, if it suited us to do so, in treating Rumania's acceptance of a German garrison as an act that places her definitely among our enemies. No scruple need deter us from bombing the oil wells, if this could be done effectively before the Germans can organise their defences.

Cement and Shelters

As Chairman of the Cement Makers' Federation, Lord Wolmer replies this week to our recent remarks on the shortage of cement. He objects to the statement (in our issue of September 28th) that the cement "ring"—i.e., the Federation and its biggest constituents, The Associated Portland Cement combine—restricted output in pre-war years and quotes figures of increased deliveries in certain years. This, however, does not establish that the ring's policy did not "restrict" output. The point is that output of cement (which is an expanding industry all over the world) would have been much larger, and would have increased much quicker, if the control of prices had not been in the hands of a ring organisation representing private profit-making firms. Lord Wolmer's speech in November, 1938, which we mentioned a fortnight ago, referred to the "surplus capacity" in the industry, deplored the "influx of newcomers," and protested at their "price-cutting" policy. This speech could only have the result of checking an increase of capacity and a fall of prices.

The demand for cement would have been greater over the last ten years, and a larger output capacity could thus have been fully employed, if prices had been lower. It was the ring's high price policy which made output capacity "redundant" by restricting demand. This conclusion is not in the least affected by the fact that in certain years the combine reduced prices. Costs were also falling rapidly. What matters is not whether prices go up or down, but whether they are too high in relation to costs. The only test is the level of profits. Between 1930 and 1937 trading profits of Associated Portland Cement rose from £534,781 to £1,054,591 (or about 20 per cent. on ordinary capital), and of British Portland cement from £348,123 to £634,572 (also about 20 per cent. on ordinary capital). In 1938, the year in which Lord Wolmer says prices had to be raised further because of higher coal costs, the trading profit of both companies rose further. In the period between 1932 and 1938, when the ring's grip was strengthened, prices and profits were rising together. If there had been no ring organisation in those years to hold up prices, profits would certainly have been lower, but we should probably have entered the war with a greater cement capacity.

Lord Wolmer states that the West Hartlepool cement plant was closed down because it was uneconomic. He does not deny that it was closed down and that it was purchased by the Combine. Whether or not its directors had decided to close it down before negotiations with the Combine were begun is not clear. But in any case the incident clearly shows what happens if the control of our war industries is in the hands of private profit-making organisations with no responsibility to the public. Naturally, Associated Portland Cement could not be expected to go on running a works which were unable to produce at a profit. But when the public asks for shelters in order to save lives, it does not much care whether the cement was made at a profit or at a loss.

One may concede that the cement ring might have been run by Lord Wolmer and Sir Malcolm Stewart in a much more restricted manner than it actually was. But now that full Government control is at last to be established, there should be some guarantee that effective powers will not simply be put into the hands of the old ring, as has happened in so many other industries. For instance, independent experts maintain that our output of cement could be rapidly increased by 50 per cent. if production from blast-furnace slag were undertaken. The Combine are reputed to look with disfavour on this plan, and, naturally again, they cannot perhaps be expected to take on such a big financial risk. But why not set up a series of Government cement factories, financed on the aircraft shadow factory lines, to get out of the difficulty? There is no doubt that, with an adequate supply of cement, the construction of bomb-proof shelters in London is perfectly practicable.

Compensation for War Damage

Mr. Churchill in his latest periodic statement on the War Situation indicated that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is about to introduce a Bill providing for Compulsory Insurance of House Property against air-raid damage. He also indicated that an insurance scheme would be instituted for the protection of mobile property. Both schemes are to be retro-active. The reversal of the decision of the Chamberlain Government based on the Weir Committee report is as welcome as the change in the attitude to deep shelters which was also "supported" by an "expert" committee. Unfortunately the reversal of Government policy is based not on reconsideration of the problem—but on empirical grounds—the fact that air-raid damage did not rise to the figures originally feared. It is to be hoped that an answer will be found to the night bomber. But it would be dangerous to base compensation on the low level of damage. In fact compensation will be a more urgent necessity the higher the damage. Civilian morale depends on sound sleep. And sound sleep depends not only on deep shelters and absence of noise but also on the absence of extreme worry about the economic future of families. Payment of compensation does not mean an additional burden on the community. It is a transfer payment spreading the loss over the community as it should be. This is not to say that all damage should also be *repaired* before the war is over. And here again we discern the dichotomy of all war-economic problems. Compensation should be granted in full at present prices to everyone. But either this compensation must be blocked (and only the interest on it paid out) or the supply of goods—and repair services—must be strictly rationed. The first alternative

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seems to have been adopted by the Government. It suffers as all *total* controls suffer from the fact that the rich who have *other* accumulated reserves can use those to replace their losses even if they have abundant supplies and the compensation payment is blocked. The second—and socially sound—alternative, however, involves planning and collective control of production and distribution. And as yet we are far from that point.

Economic Notes (by an Industrial Correspondent)

This week's Trades Union Congress, cut down to three days, did not allow much opportunity for general discussions. The chief thing the General Council had to report was the failure of its negotiations with the employers for a general adjustment of wartime relations. The T.U.C. leaders put forward a five-point programme, including the following points: no substantial price increases during the war; no restraint on legitimate wage increases in face of higher costs of living; full price-control by the State with an extension of the range of subsidies in order to keep prices down; a pledge that voluntary savings would not be made an excuse for refusing wage increases in the future or for restricting social service benefits; and the prevention of unreasonably high profits. The negotiations which followed broke down, we are told, over the question of wage policy, and no joint statement was even agreed upon, though some rather general promises were made in response to the fourth of the T.U.C.'s points.

The Cabinet changes raise very important questions of economic policy. At the Board of Trade Sir Andrew Duncan has been a vigorous exponent of the policy of keeping up exports, even when the demands of the export trades for materials, machines and men have come into conflict with those of the war supply departments. Will Sir Andrew sing another tune, now that he has been transferred to the Ministry of Supply? The export question is admittedly very difficult. As long as we have to pay America for war supplies, we have to keep up exports in order to do so. But the exports which it is easiest to sell are largely those which use up the same kinds of materials and skilled man-power as are needed for making munitions (e.g., motor-car exports, chiefly to the Dominions). If these exports were stopped, the Dominions would probably buy American cars instead, and thus use up dollars which we can borrow and use for buying American munitions. Thus, in a roundabout way, our exports of cars and machinery do bring us in munitions. So runs the argument of those who wish to keep the trade going. But it is not too easy to justify the use of scarce materials and man-power in making private cars for export; and clearly the argument would no longer hold at all if either the United States were to give us unlimited credits for buying arms and materials, or the Dominions could be induced to restrict their imports of cars and patch their old ones up instead, as we are forced to do here.

* * *

As for the Ministry of Supply, there is plenty to be done there. Herbert Morrison's work of reorganisation had been only begun and had not, we fancy, reached to any appreciable extent the parts of the Ministry which deal with raw materials. In effect, the various raw material "controls" are not so much parts of the Ministry of Supply as independent authorities loosely attached to it, and dominated in many cases by the Trade Associations or Combines of the trades concerned. Then there is the question of contract policy in the sections of the Ministry which deal with finished goods. In this field there has been a marked improvement, but the Ministry is still over-centralised: it has hardly any knowledge of the sub-contractors who carry out a large part of its work; and it is still not making nearly enough use of the services of small firms. It ought, instead of trying to work mainly through the big firms and leaving them to make their own arrangements with the smaller fry, to deal with the latter through properly equipped regional offices of its own, under definite instructions to establish co-operative pools of small firms, and thus bring into continuous use the large reserves of men and equipment that are still going to waste. Incidentally, this policy would lessen the danger from air attack by dispersing plants more widely and in smaller units. Naturally, the big firms much prefer to keep the game in their own hands.

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NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

MR. MORRISON'S TASK

MR. MORRISON has an immense task. It is twofold. He has to act with authority as chief controller of London and he has to preserve our freedom. Some will try to make him believe that the two are inconsistent or contradictory. They are, on the contrary, two sides of the same task. To provide good and safe shelter accommodation, to over-ride incompetent authorities, to see that the civilian population is received from districts that are not fit for civil life and that full provision is made for those who must carry on working in them—in seeing that these necessary changes are made swiftly and efficiently he will be fulfilling popular demand. After the experience of the last few weeks, and especially after the House of Commons debate on Wednesday, he may expect the more lively co-operation of the Minister of Health. Mr. Malcolm MacDonald has not risen to the opportunity presented to him: and he found deep and well-informed resentment in the House properly directed against the Ministry of Health as well as against Sir John Anderson. He admitted that much of the criticism was "entirely justified," and explained that he had made the mistake of leaving too much to incompetent local authorities. We find no difficulty in believing that more accommodation in well-to-do houses in the West End has been made available than there are homeless people willing to enter them. The reasons are clear. East-enders are naturally reluctant to leave their homes and friends. Family, street and district loyalty are all strong. Moreover, women naturally object to separation from their husbands—especially when there is no provision for their husband's food or comfort. They know, too, that London as a whole is being bombed and see no point in moving from one district to another. All this is soluble if the areas to be evacuated are defined, and communal feeding and hostels are provided for those who must work in them; and the houses to which women and children are sent are out of the London area. Many of the comfortable houses in London will make good hostels: the best accommodation for those who are evacuated—often with their friends—are large and often empty houses in country districts. In these conditions we have reason to believe that most of the objections to evacuation on the part of the homeless in badly-hit areas would disappear and that a general evacuation order for such areas would be welcomed. But full provision for those who stay behind is an absolutely necessary prior condition, and evacuation must be outside the London area.

The demand that money should not be wasted on bunks in surface shelters and that deep shelters should have bunks and proper lavatories and that canteen facilities should be available—these are the spontaneous and inevitable demands of London people. They have been urged by many people for the last two years. Miss Wilkinson, who is an excellent choice as Mr. Morrison's lieutenant, will, we are convinced, support such demands. But they have not so far been met, and petitions urging them on the Government are being signed in shelters in more than one part of London. We are indignant at the news that such petitions are seized by the police and confiscated. This is an arbitrary procedure which cannot be justified. The wording of the petitions we have seen is unexceptionable. Why is this action taken? Presumably because some of those who organise such petitions are Communists. Inevitably this will be so—if the local authorities (in many cases Labour authorities) and the national authorities do not do the job, the Communists have their opportunity and are right to use it. If their petitions are seized, they have the best possible further reason for saying that the authorities do not care for the poor and wish to hide the true state of affairs.

Mr. Morrison, we presume, will stop this new "Silent Column" tendency. Once again we see at work the influence which would, if it could, push us into the ghastly errors of French democracy. The

Daily Worker is exasperating? Yes. Well, then, says the Trade Union Congress, refuse its representatives facilities at meetings of the T.U.C. That a Labour body should play into the hands of those who better understand the implications of muzzling the press is altogether deplorable. Mr. Morrison will find those around him who will wish him to suppress the *Daily Worker* altogether. He must not yield to this pressure, whether it comes from Labour or from official quarters. The death of French democracy was censorship and suppression; the more discontent is suppressed the more it grows; suppression fosters the belief that the war is only fought for the benefit of the well-to-do. In that case Hitler's work of disruption is done for him. Mr. Morrison's tasks are complementary. The war can only be fought democratically. By organising well and changing wrongs morale is maintained. Freedom and efficiency are equally necessary to combat Hitler.

WHAT DOES THIS GOVERNMENT MEAN?

THE National Government enters its third phase since the beginning of the war; the new phase differs a little, but far too little, from the last. In the first disastrous period of waiting Mr. Chamberlain remained Prime Minister and under his leadership plutocracy and officialdom sowed the seeds of many misfortunes. When the day of catastrophe came, Mr. Churchill took office and Labour shared his responsibilities. Under this second Government, which still suffered too much from the inclusion of men chosen rather for their party status than for their exceptional ability, a real advance has been made. Invasion has been forestalled or beaten off. Great strides have been made in production: if the Ministry of Supply is still, on the raw material side, in the hands of rings it is at least organised as a Ministry and no more the Augean stables that Mr. Burgin left to his successor. In at least one direction, the organisation of the nation's food, the outline of a social war economy becomes visible. Air production, air strategy and air performance have inflicted on Hitler his first serious set-back. On the debit side of the account we must point to the rebuff to India—a blunder of Mr. Churchill's own prejudice. A second disaster has been the failure to distinguish between friendly and enemy aliens; here is a disgrace which has still to be remedied and which it will take long to live down. The refusal to provide deep shelters in which common people could sleep in safety during air raids is again only to be explained by the personal stubbornness of Sir John Anderson, who stopped his ears to argument two years ago, and refused to take out the earplugs even when the bombs began to fall on those whose security was entrusted to him. In both these vital matters Mr. Morrison has the opportunity of a century. In removing the scandal of the maladministration of many London Boroughs he may lay the foundation for good government in the future. He will not be either encouraged or deterred by the strange fact that his predecessor's obvious and admitted failure has been rewarded by a seat in the War Cabinet.

Mr. Chamberlain's retirement means that Mr. Churchill becomes the leader of the Conservative Party. The results of this change are not readily foreseen. Mr. Churchill is a national, not a party figure. His commanding position is built on years of strenuous opposition to the official policy and leadership of the Tory Party. Conservative headquarters do not love Mr. Churchill. No one has done so much as he to upset the plans of Mr. Margesson and the propaganda organised by Sir Joseph Ball at the Conservative Research Bureau. Some of the appointments which Mr. Churchill makes or sanctions force one to ask whether in his single-minded devotion to the cause of national defence he does not too easily assume the honest conversion of men who were his bitter enemies. To-day his overwhelming ascendancy guards him against intrigue, but it would be flying in the face of experience not to observe that those who now acclaim him as leader will hope that as leader he will be more amenable to party wishes than he was when his leadership depended solely on his national prestige. They may feel that they can already rely on him about India, perhaps about the Empire in general; they will assume that they can obstruct any move for an advanced social programme at home, and turn into hypocrisy our declared aim of freeing the enslaved peoples of Europe. He now leads a party which has always put in the first place the retention of its propertied and privileged position. Mr. Churchill, as he has himself told us, is prepared for any sacrifice of vested interests in the interests of victory over Hitler: he is far too able and clear-sighted a man to think that our real allies on the Continent are those financial and aristocratic elements that have always in every country attempted to buy immunity for themselves, even though it meant playing the part of M. Laval or Major Quisling. Mr. Churchill must see that there is no hope in the prospect of a mere bombing match between the contending nations, and that an expeditionary force in Europe will only be a disaster, unless we can co-operate with submerged forces on the Continent. These are facts that Tory headquarters cannot readily stomach, and yet without a clear statement of revolutionary war aims there is no basis for anti-Hitler propaganda and no means of refuting Hitler's picture of us as a purely selfish plutocracy. Europe has not forgotten the contrast between the promises made during the last war and the peace that followed—the war against Prussianism that ended with a British army at Archangel and a blockade which was retained until the genuinely revolutionaries in Germany were shot down. Nor have British people forgotten the contrast between the homes that were promised to heroes and the homes they actually received.

If we cannot hope to defeat Fascism with bulldog negations we cannot hope either to maintain the will to do so among the ordinary people of this country by a vague social policy which does not disguise an inability to see beyond the *status quo*. The retirement of Mr. Chamberlain and the presence of Labour leaders in the Government and War Cabinet should be a guarantee that we are finally done with this numerically small but influential City and F.B.I. clique which has so long controlled England. But we have no such guarantee. Even Mr. Bevin, so much the most forcible and forthright, talks too much of changes "after the war." Labour in office has strengthened the war effort and pledged itself with Mr. Churchill to let no vested interest hamper efficiency. But there, in general, it has stopped. What is meant by "equality of sacrifice"? If the people of England are to believe in a new social order after the war the beginning must be made here and now while the war necessitates change. We all recall the American song about "pie in the sky when we die." There are constructive and permanent changes which can be made by the existing coalition of Tory democrats and Labour democrats—if there exists in home policy a leader with anything of the flair that Mr. Churchill shows in the business of national defence.

What Blimp or Brummagem Tory dare now dispute the necessity of safeguarding the welfare of the coming generation? What war-time measure would be better than a scheme of family allowances? Again, after the last war there were grand promises of a scheme of education that would have, at least in part, modified that most class-ridden of all our institutions. To-day the public school system is hard hit and popular education is almost non-existent. The needs of education and evacuation can both be met, at least in part, by taking over some of the great houses of England as hostels and boarding schools for children from our overgrown and heavily bombed towns. The future can be guaranteed by a scheme of democratic education of which the foundations can be laid during the war. Again the destruction of buildings, the vast majority of which are better destroyed, raises in the most violent form the question of homes for heroes. Why was housing policy so great a muddle and so perpetual a misery in the post war years? Because fundamentals were never tackled: instead of planning new cities with gardens as well as factories, we assumed the permanent existence of the Duke of Westminster and his lesser colleagues in the landlord business, and attempted by subsidies and complex legislation to do what could only have been done satisfactorily by taking over the land and rebuilding the England we wanted. Sir John Reith can do nothing in his new post unless we rid ourselves of this vast vested interest.

Let us, above all, finally and for ever banish from our counsels the men who because they manipulate finance assure us that we shall all be too poor after the war to do anything worth doing. All they mean is that the property-owning class will, if it is permitted, again extort so great a toll on the community and impose so restrictive a policy that the highest hopes of mankind will again be cheated. Already speculation is beginning in London's damaged building sites. If such areas are not "sterilised" so that building in the future may be a public service and not a private speculation we shall again find ourselves "too poor" to use the riches that are ours. Mr. Keynes is abundantly right in this. The war need not make us materially "poor." We were "poor" after the last war only because the rich were still rich, the poor still poorer and the unemployed even more unemployed. No one at home or abroad will believe Labour Ministers or Conservative Ministers or Prime Ministers when they talk about a "new social order" here and on the Continent, unless even in the heat and opportunity of this battle tangible social changes foreshadow the outline and lineaments of the rejuvenated England that now decorates the perorations of every national spokesman.

THE DOUGHBOYS COME TO TOWN!

New York City

"THE Battle of Britain is half won—by the British" (*vide* New York's radio announcers); Hitler's plans completely deranged and a winter stalemate ahead in Western Europe, with Britain growing hourly stronger (*vide New York World-Telegram*); neutral reports from London considerably more optimistic than six weeks ago (*vide* Colonel Henry L. Stimson, U.S. Secretary for War); "If England should be defeated we can hardly hope to keep war from our own shores" (*vide* Governor Lehman of New York State—but that sort of obvious truth is an old story here now); U.S. war contracts totalling billions of dollars handed out in the last four weeks; at least six further proposals for aiding Britain now under consideration at Washington; the picturesque Mayor Maury Maverick, of San Antonio, Texas, climbing on to the "complete-union-between-Britain-and-the-United-States-now" bandwagon, and declaring "the two nations have been living in sin for years—it's time they got married"; talks between Cordell Hull, Lord Lothian and Mr. Casey (Australian Minister) on pooling world naval bases on the verge of completion, and already causing a swell headache at Tokyo; further reports that Uncle Sam is to "look after" the Pacific while Britain is busy in her own back-yard; 100,000 National Guards already called out and 500,000 conscripts to follow them into khaki by spring, making 1,200,000 doughboys (regular and conscript) by April 1st next—such is the whirlwind American scene to-day.

The United States has now reached the stage of "suspended war," and is as near to a war footing, and a war psychology, as it is ever likely to reach until the solemn hour, if it ever comes, when the American battle fleet sails under sealed orders, and the doughboys set forth to help in "smacking down the Nazis." If a Marlborough presides over Downing Street, a Jefferson sits in the white dwelling-house on Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington. Backed up by some 131,000,000 other Jeffersons. For if the defence of London is part of a "people's war," just as surely the defence of liberty to which the United States is bending its amazing energies is above all else a people's job. Six months ago a shrewd American remarked to me: "On the day that you see peacetime conscription introduced into the United States without a squawk from the people, plus the 'five and ten cent' stores devoting whole counters to the sale of patriotic trinkets, you will know the die is cast, and that for good or ill this nation has decided that Britain must win, come what may."

I thought of that remark when, a few days ago, the President named October 16th as the date when 16,500,000 Americans will register for the army draft—and, simultaneously, the chain-stores increased the space devoted to "patriotic emblems" to make room for several new "lines," including star-spangled scarves for graceful necks, dime reprints of the American Constitution and, most significant of all, red-white-and-blue edged notepaper and envelopes bearing the American eagle rampant and the slogan "God bless America"—"suitable for writing to your husband or boy-friend serving his country in the army."

Three factors which have contributed to this violent rush of patriotic fervour are of especial interest.

First and foremost, the dogged courage and steadiness of Londoners under the worst hammering in all history has finally convinced Americans that the British bastion will hold, and that Hitlerism is on the way out. As Anne O'Hare McCormick put it in the *New York Times* the other day: "The invincible fortifications built by man have crumbled—but man himself is the line that holds." Hence, as the outward and visible sign of an inner conviction, the formation of a Canada-United States joint defence board; the introduction of conscription, and revelation of further joint-defence plans pending, are accepted by Americans everywhere without any ripple of serious protest—a miracle for which Londoners may claim the credit. Kansas City and Bismarck, North Dakota, did not always think the Cockneys were great stuff. But they do to-day. Shellshocked after days and nights spent watching and listening to what, viewed from here, seems very like the end of the world, the American people no longer give a damn what may be the repercussions within the Reich of the decisions taken by the Washington Administration, so long as every decision taken is directed towards the all-important job of singeing Hitler's moustache good and proper.

Ergo—reports of further aid to Britain burn up the telegraph wires. The Civil Aeronautics Board reports a decision to make airfields in Florida and Texas available for training Canadian pilots during the coming winter, when flying will be curtailed in the Dominion by weather (opening up the intriguing prospect of American citizens, enrolled in the Royal Air Force, training in their own country to fight Hitler, which the New York wits call "neutrality—with knobs on"!). It is announced that negotiations are almost complete for the British Ministry of Shipping to purchase 24 merchantmen belonging to the U.S. Maritime Commission; it is hinted that 25 flying fortresses, the American Army's super-bombers able to pack a bomb-load of 11,000 pounds from Heston to the Rumanian oilfields, or any other point in Europe, will be released to the R.A.F. shortly.

There is no point in continuing the catalogue; at this moment at least six distinct proposals for further aid to Britain are on President Roosevelt's desk, and it seems highly probable that before this article appears important decisions will have been taken. What matters is not the fate of this or that proposal but the fact that—their sense of urgency sharpened and their appetites blunted by the London horror—Americans are asking with ever-increasing insistence "are we doing all we can? If not, why not?" Not so long ago the President was believed to be ahead of public opinion. That was before bombs destroyed London landmarks and East End homes.

The second factor conditioning U.S. thinking to-day is a general realisation that the security of this country, and the survival of the American way of life, depend upon issues which will be decided, not on Capitol Hill at Washington but among the debris in the streets of London. Hence a marked increase in fellow-feeling towards the English. Large numbers of Americans now feel as if a member of their own family had been set upon by thugs.

Realisation that all Nazis are the enemies of democracy everywhere is responsible for a corresponding change in the attitude of the United States towards the pro-Nazis within its own frontiers. The fierce light of publicity has been focussed on the activities of the chief Nazi rabble-rousers here. Some of them known to me have flown the coop for the more hospitable shores of Nippon. One or two of the more tactless have been politely invited by the State Department to get out. Those remaining are on the defensive.

The attitude of run-of-the-mill Americans to Hitler's stooges (known here as "the lousy so-and-so's") was illustrated by the fate of the redoubtable Joe McWilliams, glamorous pro-Nazi leader of the so-called "American Destiny Party" and "Führer of New York City," who stood as a candidate for the Republican ticket (uninvited by the Republicans) for the Yorkville German-speaking section of New York at the recent primary elections. More than 1,000 residents of Yorkville signed papers supporting his candidature; less than 700 in all voted for "McWilliams, anti-Semitism and Hitler for ever." The day after the election McWilliams appeared before the local bench on a remanded charge of inciting the populace to racial riots and was sent (by a Jewish magistrate!) to Bellevue Mental Hospital for observation as a pathological case. McWilliams modestly remarked that Hitler's chances hadn't looked so hot, either, on the day following the Munich beerhall *Putsch!* And tactfully implied, before retiring into the seclusion of Bellevue, that his elevation to a Nazified City Hall might be expected any Tuesday. New York remarked "Oh, yeah!" and turned to the latest R.A.F. score.

The third factor inherent in this era of "Ballyhoo, bunting and battle-talk" is that, at long last, the United States realises time is of some importance. Since Congress took ninety days to make up its collective mind about the Military Service Act (and, it is breathed here, even Roosevelt and Churchill took fourteen days to work out a formula for the destroyer-bases deal acceptable both to the British and U.S. parliaments) it has dawned upon the Yankees that the rate of progress isn't good enough. Newspapers are pointing out, with sinister emphasis, that in one hundred days Napoleon escaped from Elba, reconquered France, lost the battle of Waterloo and surrendered. Or, to bring the record up to date and in accord with Nazi notions of time, in 100 days Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg fell, Dunkerque was evacuated, Paris and the Maginot Line collapsed, France surrendered, Italy declared war, Norway gave up, Britain seized the French fleet, Russia took Lithuania and Bessarabia, and the blitzkrieg against London got going.

Sometimes in this world it is the little items, tucked away in out-of-the-way corners of newspapers, which are the most revealing. I noticed that New Jersey State police are preparing against air raids because—according to the superintendent of police—"the risk of attack from the air, remote as it may seem, is a risk that cannot be ignored."

That police chief put it in a nutshell. Americans having decided that the possibility of having to share this world with Hitler is "a risk which cannot be ignored" have dumped the U.S.A. in the scales alongside John Bull. Londoners should also note that if anyone here even hints that the London-New York Axis isn't

capable of dealing with Hitler and Mussolini (with or without Franco) he is regarded as "nutty." This is a nation of accomplished gamblers. And if there is one thing every American down to the rawest doughboy considers too screwball to be worth a moment's thought, it is the idea that Uncle Sam would be backing a loser.

HESSELL TILTMAN

A LONDON DIARY

SIX o'clock and a wet dark morning. The cars, one of which contained Mr. Boothby, the Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Food, started on their tour of East End feeding centres and SOS breakfasts for people coming out of the shelters. The tour stopped short, for almost as soon as we were in the East End we ran into a practical example of the problem of providing for poor people who come out of their shelters to find their homes demolished.

* * *

A considerable number of people had been bombed out of their homes. The police in charge were telling them to go to an address which would have meant a half-an-hour's walk for some of the aged and infirm people, who stood about looking at the wreckage with lamentable eyes. Some of the older women were in tears, the younger people took it much more easily. Then we discovered who was the real force in the area. Father Groser, with a short mackintosh flying in the wind over his cassock, rushed round with Mr. Boothby to what should have been the central organisation for the area, and found nobody there but a night watchman—which is really preposterous; off to the L.C.C.'s divisional headquarters, where it appeared that they had never been notified of the arrival of this bomb, though it had fallen early in the night. As soon as they heard of the tragedy they named a convenient Rest Centre and half-an-hour later the homeless people were installed in a large building where all of us, including Mr. Boothby, set to work under the extremely capable management of the woman in charge to supply breakfast to those who had been bombed out. The Ministry's organiser of communal feeding settled down to buttering bread. The serious deficiency was the lack of any "incident officer" whose duty it should have been to notify the proper authority, see that the right information was given to the homeless people, and to prepare for their accommodation. If it had not been for Father Groser, several hours would have passed before the machinery got to work, and during these hours these unfortunate people would have been tramping in the wet from one address to another unfed and uncared for. Yet the goodwill was there, the organisation was there, the food was there, and the help was there. The problem was not in the least insoluble, it was solved by improvisation. There should have been a Welfare Board, representing all the authorities concerned.

* * *

I have made both night and early morning visits to the big shelter that was described in this issue last week. There is a very great improvement. At night in one corner they were singing community songs and further off there was a wireless with band music. A cup of tea was available for twopence. The smell in the early morning was not unbearable, and the heat was only bad in unventilated corners. The margarine had all been taken away; the lavatory accommodation is better, but still not well placed and insufficiently lighted. Duckboards are wanted to solve this problem; otherwise people tread the unsavoury damp all over the place and carry it to their blankets. There are other immediate improvements that can be made. But all that, I hope, is coming. The dangers of rheumatism and rheumatic fever, when thousands of people sleep on stone in damp weather, and the appalling risks of epidemics remain. Lord Horder has written a strong report on these dangers of shelter sleeping; it is impossible to over-emphasise their gravity. Sleeping bunks allotted to ticket holders will be some help, but they will not in themselves prevent epidemics. Has anyone thought of the effects of thousands of people carrying their bedding through the rain to homes in which there are no windows and leaving it rolled up wet to sleep in again the next night?

* * *

One of the oddest things to note in visiting the destruction in the East End is that the public-houses have in general stood up wonderfully to bombing, while the schools and churches have not. Street after street I noticed where the public-house still stood on the corner, though all the houses were more or less in ruins. Symbolic of the age, surely: a drunken age, with religion and education as the first casualties?

Much useful welfare and relief work in the East End is done by members of the Friends Ambulance Unit—a reminder of the sensible use of the C.O. in the job he is willing to do. In the midst of our present preoccupations it is natural, perhaps, for the public to have forgotten the problem of the C.O. and the pledge Mr. Chamberlain gave that he should not repeat the last war's folly of playing cat and mouse with the C.O.'s and leaving them in the hands of military authorities who do not know what to do with them. A letter published in this issue suggests that the cat-and-mouse business may be starting again, while I have received a shameful and unhappy document which has come out of a military barracks and which describes the systematic bullying and rough-housing of C.O.s in an effort to break their spirit. These allegations will have to be carefully sifted in Parliament.

* * *

The decision to close the Burma Road was Mr. Churchill's own decision, and the decision to open it is also his. It is right to correct the view that the Foreign Office was primarily responsible in this case. Lord Halifax fought against the closing of the road and Mr. Churchill took the full responsibility when he announced it. It is easy to understand his motives for an act of "appeasement" distasteful to his inclinations and temperament. It was a military decision. He thought we were about to be invaded and the naval experts urged that we could do nothing in the Far East if Japan attacked our shipping. It seemed worth while to try to keep off Japan for another three months. As always, Sir Robert Craigie has been a bad adviser about Japan. We have always heard about the friendly Liberal element in Tokio, which has never in fact checked the militarists in Manchuria or China. Now that the U.S.A. is alive to the situation in the Pacific and the invasion danger seems, for the moment at least, to be past, the Burma Road is to be reopened and, possibly, a loan for oil will be given to China.

* * *

One of the most remarkable of aces flying in the R.A.F. happens to be a member of the Royal Navy. He was recently awarded the D.F.C.—the high honour which every fighting pilot prizes. According to R.A.F. practice he was given an afternoon off during which the ribbon was sewn on to his uniform. His home people were informed; there were celebrations. Then the Admiralty stepped in. He was told that as a member of the Royal Navy he could not receive an R.A.F. decoration and he was compelled to have it taken off his uniform. From outside some of us might shrug our shoulders at this story. What did it matter? He had won the decoration and his friends knew it. Was it important that he could not wear it? Terribly important, my informant who watched the whole thing tells me: The pilot was cut to the heart; the squadron is angry and is far from satisfied by a half promise from the Admiralty that some time or other the D.S.C. may be given him instead. A curious case of departmentalism: incredibly silly on the face of it, bad for morale and altogether clumsy.

* * *

I was flattered to receive the other day a letter suggesting that I ought frequently to discuss religious topics in this diary because my remarks on the value of prayer and on New Testament interpretation showed unusual originality and understanding. I hasten to add that this letter does no more than offset a number of others from readers of the more orthodox type who write to say that my attitude to religion mars an otherwise admirable journal, that if I was not so hostile to the Church it would be possible to put it in the hands of young persons, and so forth. However, I am emboldened enough to ask whether among the various mental confusions of a confused period there is not something peculiarly ridiculous about the survival of antique conceptions of Providence. "Providentially," said the gentleman who had weathered a terrible thunderstorm in his carriage, "Providentially the lightning struck the box seat." Just so, providentially the bombs tend to kill in the East rather than the West End. And here is one from last week's *Sunday Times*:—

> Two recent happenings—one a providential deliverance of 320 children from peril at sea, the other a tragedy in which seventy-five young lives were lost . . .

What an arbitrary power is Providence! Christ once rebuked this manner of thinking in the case of the fall of the tower of Siloam. Were the seventy-five who died "sinners above" the 320 providentially delivered? Did none pray for them, too?

* * *

I discussed the survival of this odd superstition with my friend the theologian the other day. He remarked that in the country

Providence is often used the other way round as the mysterious Power which does you evil. God is thanked for the harvest; Providence blamed for the drought. A child is run over and the parent says fatalistically not that it is God's will, but that it is Providence and can't be helped. He reminded me of the farmer who complained bitterly of the destruction of his crops and said: "That dratted Providence . . But there's One Above that will see me righted yet."

* * *

Trinity, Cambridge, could not have done better than invite Professor Trevelyan to succeed Sir J. J. Thomson as Master. I hope he will still have time to write history. I should not call him a great historian because I keep that title for the few who have had a conscious philosophy and original interpretation of the facts they record. But G. M. Trevelyan has done history in this country an invaluable service; he began the revival of readable history. Few people who have read his Garibaldi volumes, or his admirable Stuart England (the best, I think, of his books), or his more recent studies of modern history, will remember his slimmer volume entitled *Clio, a Muse*. That book was put into my hands when I first went to Cambridge, and the case for history which the common people can read and the case against pretending that factual research can in itself lead to the formation of historical science from which laws can be deduced, is nowhere stated with such charm and wit. I could write at length about Trevelyan's work for the National Trust and his generous contributions to the preservation of the English countryside. But he has also a kind of generosity which is one of the most important qualities for the Master of a college. He is generous in his encouragement of the young. I shall never forget the happiness it gave to me when, as a young man, I published my first book and received from Trevelyan, already England's best-known historian, a letter of congratulation and an invitation to talk over a period in which we were both interested. That is the sort of generosity which young people never forget.

* * *

I intended to write a note this week about barley sugar, which is of all palatable and easily obtained foods the most quickly assimilated and immediately restorative. I have only recently discovered just how valuable it is. I always have some in my pocket. I was about to urge in public, as I had already in private, that a great deal of barley sugar should be distributed freely or cheaply to everyone doing a hard day's work; and now this morning, as I sit down to write, here is the announcement that the L.C.C. and the Ministry of Food are actually providing it for A.R.P. and other war service workers! Really, it is quite exciting to find a Ministry which gets a move on in small as well as big ways.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mary H. Litchfield.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

THE "REP" AND COMFORTS FUND

If the "Rep" [Repertory Theatre] wants to prove to Dundee that it is not only willing to cater well for the city on six days in the week, but is also ready to do the very best to take its place in the city on the seventh day, then why not go about it in the right way? . . .

I propose that the "Rep" organise an intercession service with the entire company doing what it can to help. . . .

Ponder on this:—While Dundee kept to the "straight and narrow" as far as she has been allowed, no bomb dropped on this city. The first week she has departed from this "narrow" way she has had a timely warning without loss of life, thank God.—Correspondent in the *Dundee Courier*.

If the case of wine left by Col. Crawford with the Universal Aunts is not claimed by October 30th it will be sold in aid of the Aunts Bomber Fund.—Advt. in the *Times*.

There is little hope of the repair of the ravages of war if our Overseas Trade Department is to continue to exchange notes with its opposite number in Bulgaria, Uruguay, or wherever it may be, to the exclusion or over the heads of our merchant houses. That would be to put ourselves on a level with the lesser qualities of the foreigner, and though it is not our habit to say so, it is our higher qualities which alone can tackle the enormous tasks ahead. The necessity for such blunt speaking is the greater from the circumstance that for war purposes we have deliberately employed eminent Socialists and allowed them to occupy some of the most important economic positions in the Government. War and Peace being exact opposites, there is no objection to a frank recognition of the close affinity between Socialism and War, and it does not follow from that that the ideas of these same Socialists will be helpful in the winning of the Peace.—Sir Ernest J. P. Benn, Bt., in an Insurance Co.'s House Journal.

I WILL ARISE

(After W. B. Yeats)

I WILL arise and go now, and seek a Ministry,
And a deep shelter find there of ferro-concrete made,
The Departmental personnel will all make room for me,
And I shall sleep through the b—— loud raid.

Yes, I shall wait for peace there, for peace keeps stopping short,
Stopping for the wail of warning that noon and darkness brings;
Here midnight's all a-jitter with the A.A. guns' report
And evening full of the Luftwaffe's wings.

I will arise and go now, for wandering astray
I hear from Whitehall's refuges the long untroubled snore;
As I duck in surface shelters the Blitz can blast away,
I hear it in the deep earth's core.

SAGITTARIUS

WOMAN'S PLACE

THERE were several protests against the recent—and, I imagine, now defunct—suggestion that men should not be allowed to sleep in the Tube stations during the blackout and that only women and children should be admitted. Most of the protests came from women, and they were based, not only on the commonsense ground that men engaged on important work must be given the chance to get more sleep, but on the idealistic ground that to discriminate between men and women in such a matter was to violate the principle of the equality of the sexes.

I remember that, at the time of the fury over the execution of Nurse Cavell, a number of feminists protested in a similar mood against an outcry that drew a large part of its force from the fact that Nurse Cavell was a woman. They did honour to Nurse Cavell's heroism, but maintained that, if she had done things for which a man would have been shot, the Germans, according to the laws of war, had as much right to shoot her as if she had been a man. I did not agree with them, and wrote an article in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION at the time, called "Why It Is Worse to Shoot a Woman." What I said in it I forget, but, whatever it was, I am still of the same opinion. I do not believe that every difference between the treatment of men and the treatment of women is inevitably a denial of the equality of the sexes. The British, it is said, did not shoot women spies during the last war. I think they were right. I once mentioned this fact in the course of an argument with a cynical friend, who replied: "No, but they handed them over to the French." If they did, I think they were wrong.

As to the preferential treatment of women and children in the Tube stations, I agree that men have as much need of shelter as women and children; but I think that the men who said: "Women and children first," were, if wrong in this particular instance, stating a general principle which has played a great part in the civilisation of the human animal. To be classed with children as though they were helpless may be regarded by women as not very complimentary; but the life-boat rule was never meant to be insulting. It may possibly have been the expression of an instinctive feeling that, so long as women and children survive, the preservation of the race is secure. Woman more than man is regarded as the channel of life from one generation to another. That, perhaps, is why we speak of Mother Nature and Mother Earth—guardians and furtherers of life since the beginning of recorded time.

If this argument seems to be nonsense, however, let us try another one. Chivalry, let us say, was in its origin essentially an affirmation of the equality of the sexes. At the time of its birth men were unquestionably the superior sex. More powerful than women by nature, they had seized even more power than Nature meant them to have. They were dictators in the home—lords and masters. Then, softened by love, they realised that, though superior to women in power, they were inferior to them in many other qualities not less essential. They saw woman as mother, as wife, as unattainable princess; and there were moments of illumination in which they worshipped her for her beauty, her tenderness, or her gracious ways. If the word "values" had been in use at the time, they would probably have said: "The feminine values are as important as the masculine values." When once it had been brought home to them that power does not confer superiority, except of power itself, they

saw that the particular superiority of the two sexes more or less balanced each other and in the upshot the two sexes were more or less equal. Hence all that ritual of hat-raising, seat-giving and door-opening which has lasted to the present day. They were a mark of man's abnegation of his superior feeling—his confession that power was not all.

I admit that this was only the beginning of better things. Even in our own time, there are men who continue to regard women with a curious mixture of reverence and patronage—some of them only with patronage. There are men who look on women as dolls and dickeybirds and like them to be like that; just as there are women who like to be liked for being like that. Even if chivalry has not yet civilised the world into a sense of equality, however, I hold that it has done much to keep the male in his place and to make a few countries more tolerable places to live in both for men and for women. As children, boys are taught that it is a cowardly thing to strike a girl, and this certainly makes for peace in the nursery, since there are many occasions on which the natural boy feels a strong desire to strike a girl. It is as natural as wife-beating—another activity that chivalry has diminished. In modern plays we sometimes see a young man hitting a young woman over the head with a gramophone record or slapping her on various parts of the body. This may be true to life as it is to be found in some cocktail-drinking sets, but I hope the pit and the gallery will not take it for a model. If they do, civilisation will go back by several generations, and much leeway will have to be made up in the next century or so. I am sure no woman feels more equal for being hit or even for being hit back. I have seen a man and a woman both with black eyes after an orgy of wife-beating and husband-beating, and they certainly did not look like symbols of sex equality.

As for hat-raising, that is not so important as abstention from striking a girl or woman; but it is important. It may be argued by some boorish man: "Why should I take off my hat to a woman if the woman does not take her hat off to me?" In a world based on logic, perhaps, both men and women would take off their hats to each other, and women would be compelled to change the shape of their hats, but who wants to live in a world based on logic? The raising of the hat can be justified only as a mystical act by which man acknowledges the equal superiority of woman and himself. It is a courteous phrase uttered by the hand, not necessarily to an individual woman, but to her sex. For men take off their hats even to women whom as individuals they dislike and for whom they have no respect whatever. Things of this kind enable human beings to live more agreeably together. I cannot believe that life in England would be so pleasant if men ceased to take off their hats to women.

Opening doors for women and standing aside to enable a woman to go through a door first are other parts of the language of civilisation. Opening doors is, perhaps, sometimes overdone; I have seen men almost knocking women down in the attempt to get to the door-handle before them. Letting women go in or out first, however, seems to me to be one of the essentials of the civilised life. Doctrinaire equalitarians may ask: "Why should women always be allowed to go in first? Why not men and women time about?" The answer is that this would make life too complicated. After all, someone has to go in first, and it is well that there should be a rule about it. If the rule were that men should go in first, men, I believe, would rapidly become boors. Those who quarrel with the common courtesy between the sexes scarcely realise how easy it is for a man to become a boor.

Whether the custom according to which a man gives up his seat to a woman will survive the achievement of sex equality is doubted by some people. But, if it does disappear, it will not do so without having added to the grace of life. I remember once seeing the late C. E. Maurice, a little, old, white-whiskered man in his late seventies, jumping up from his seat in a bus to give it to a girl who cannot have been more than sixteen, and, as the armful of London Library books that he was carrying tumbled to the floor in the hurry of his courtesy, I thought that here were good manners that approached the point of sanctity. I have never known a man more courteous. It was said of him that in his Republican days he was once walking along a country road when he saw Queen Victoria approaching in her carriage, and that he immediately flung himself into a ditch because, he declared, he could not bear the thought of showing respect to a monarch by taking off his hat to her or of showing disrespect to a woman by refusing to do so.

If he were living to-day, he would almost certainly find more and more young women declining to accept a seat in a bus from a white-haired man. There are, indeed, some young women who decline a seat in a bus from a man of any age. New forms of courtesy may appear which recognise the fact that woman is man's equal, not only in voting rights, but in physical fitness. Let the world improve as it may, however, the historians should make it clear that it was the age of chivalry that led up to the age of equality, and that one of the most civilising hours in the story of mankind was that in which men began to say to each other: "Women and children first."

Y. Y.

IN MEMORIAM—W. H. DAVIES

ABOUT twelve months have passed since W. H. Davies published the last of his thin little books of short poems, which used to appear every two or three years and, till the later 'twenties, were always carefully praised and reviewed at length. In this, *The Loneliest Mountain*, he said that he would write no more poetry. Perhaps he already knew he had not long to live; perhaps he felt he had no longer any heart for composition—that delicate, exciting occupation he had loved so much, which needs, however, the support of confidence that somewhere there is sympathy. Among these last verses were a few which seemed to reflect a cloud of suspicion; suspicion of affection, of fame, of life. This was a tragic change in one who had always shown so strong and natural an impulse to express joy and gratitude and trust and pleasure:

Once I was wise when, in my Youth,
I went my way alone;
Before the world destroyed my trust
And turned my heart to stone.

Or is it all in God's good time,
In keeping with His plan—
That I may put more trust in Him,
The more I lose in Man.

Possibly this mood was infrequent with him, yet I have taken an impression, here and there from his prose, and even here and there from his earlier verse, that this childlike man so easy to delight was also prone to dark suspicions. They might be corrected by a rush of affection or selfless sympathy towards one who a second before had been mistrusted, yet they were the kind which brooded on in solitude are apt to ramify wildly. And since all Davies wrote proves him a man to whom a sense of enmity was painful and perplexing in the extreme, and one for whom fellow-feeling was the condition of poetic insight, I surmise that in spite of the blessing of a contented nature which was his, he often felt like a beleaguered man. I should be surprised to hear that Davies had, in fact, one real enemy, yet in his latter days he sometimes wrote as though he were surrounded by them:

Though bees have stings, I doubt if any bee
Has ever stung a flower in all his life;
Neither, my love, can I think ill of you,
Though half the world and I may be at strife.

Can I forget your coming, like the Moon
When, robed in light, alone without a star,
She visits ruins; and the peace you brought,
When I with all the world was still at war.

I am glad to quote that little poem because, apart from its psychological relevance here, it is characteristic of him at his best when poetic feeling finds expression in words of unlaboured fitness. It does not matter to us, or to posterity, whether that poem was prompted by real or fancied persecution: it has style—individuality without mannerism. The opening shows that singularity in the choice of analogies which together with the gentleness of his fancy, so often charmed us in his verse; and if any who are inclined to smile at those who rate Davies' poetry high—such are sure to be found among THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION'S younger readers—will read the last stanza aloud, they will feel what it was that made their seniors hail him as a classic; a "classic" meaning one who has so written that a portion of his work qualifies him for a place in literature apart from its contemporary interest.

Of course, W. H. Davies was not a poet of the first magnitude; but like Suckling, Lovelace, Waller, Collins, Clare and—to come nearer to his own times—William Barnes, he sometimes wrote poetry of the first water. His place is with them. A good lyric lasts longer than most works of man, and he has written a few. No matter if such a poem is conventional or the theme is trite: "Go lovely rose" still lives and will live on, long after much original and deeper poetry is forgotten. It is the perfect suitability of the form and diction

chosen by the poet to express his feeling that embalms it. Otherwise,

> What fruitful things and dear
> Must sink beneath the tidewaves of their weight,
> If in no vessel built for sea they swim!

In 1930 Davies made an anthology of a number of poems never longer than twenty-four lines, and he had the courage to include living poets; those of their poems which, as he said, had made him envious. "Only," he added, "I could no more steal one of them than I could extract the stone from a cherry without breaking the skin." The discrimination shown in this anthology was most delicate within the limits of a personal taste which betrayed a constant preference for the simple music of the Elizabethan and the seventeenth-century lyric before the influence of the "metaphysicals" set in, and its simple sententiousness. He wished to be represented himself among the moderns by "The Kingfisher," and by "Leisure," which is well known because it expresses the essence of much that he wrote, and opens with the often-quoted lines—sometimes (alas! for it is a wise little poem) quoted with contempt:

> What is this life if, full of care,
> We have no time to stand and stare.

"The Kingfisher" shows affinity with the old gay or pensive verbal music that he loved, and except for one small blemish is perfect after its kind:

> It was the Rainbow gave thee birth,
> And left thee all her lovely hues;
> And, as her mother's name was Tears,
> So runs it in thy blood to choose
> For haunts the lonely pools, and keep
> In company with trees that weep.
>
> Go you and, with such glorious hues,
> Live with proud Peacocks in green parks;
> On lawns as smooth as shining glass,
> Let every feather show its marks;
> Get thee on boughs and clap thy wings
> Before the windows of proud Kings.
>
> Nay, lovely Bird, thou art not vain;
> Thou hast no proud, ambitious mind;
> I also love a quiet place
> That's green, away from all mankind;
> A lonely pool, and let a tree
> Sigh with her bosom over me.

The only fault I see here is in the fourth line of the second stanza, where the phrase "show its marks" is inexpressive, and dictated by the need to rhyme with "parks."

His kinship with the early seventeenth-century lyricists was noticed at once, and his art of lending to small themes a wistful largeness made some describe him as "the Herrick of our times." When reviewing *The Loneliest Mountain* I made that comparison an excuse for reading through (such are the advantages of my profession) the whole of Herrick, which I had never done before. There was, I found, a large amount of merely charming—silly or even empty—verse in *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers*, as there is, indeed, much that is of little worth in Davies' collected works, though things never quite so silly—or so exquisite. Davies is never ingeniously sophisticated, nor has he nearly so fine an ear: he is not sophisticated but simple-subtle. If I may repeat myself, neither are there phrases in his verse "extreme and scattering bright," and from his rural England (a great difference) the fairies have departed. Neither is he the rusticated scholar to whom "dull Devonshire" or "the drooping West" is a glum background to more civilised delights. He is one who really does prefer the simpler forms of happiness, and adores in Nature whatever sights suggest them. He is a poet who, having known hardships, not merely exile from courtly cultivated company, can convey, as few have done, the joy of being safe and fancy-free, and the cosy smallness of great pleasures. Yet I did, too, find something in common between them: a creative playfulness showing itself in a love of dainty metres (though Herrick was a much more ingenious craftsman) and a certain childishness.

It may puzzle posterity to find that the early twentieth-century verse which expressed joy most purely came from one who in the forming years of early manhood had been the companion of outcasts, from a one-legged pedlar to whom a doss-house was a boon. Davies himself has meditated on that paradox and found an answer which, like all his reflections upon life, is a simple truth:

> Poor souls, who think that joy is bought
> With pelf;
> The bait that captures joy is joy
> Itself.
> My joy, it came mysteriously
> At birth,
> I give it to, not take it from
> The earth.

There is sometimes a note of stoicism in his work, but of a *wise* stoicism which never scorns happiness. This kind of wisdom has seldom been more happily and tersely suggested than through "The Example," which is characteristic:

> Here's an example from
> A Butterfly;
> That on a rough, hard rock
> Happy can lie;
> Friendless and all alone
> On this unsweetened stone.
>
> Now let my bed be hard,
> No care take I;
> I'll make my joy like this
> Small Butterfly;
> Whose happy heart has power
> To make a stone a flower.

The poetry of W. H. Davies met with recognition quickly. As I have said, readers of my generation saw in him a minor English classic. He had distinction, which means that he manifested in verse and diction, which had the authority of tradition, the living uniqueness of himself. Few poets have an individuality strong enough to do that. They take refuge in mannerisms and eccentricities to conceal their lack of singularity, and follow fashion. Post-war fashion in poetry told against Davies, and he was too simple-minded not to be bewildered by what seemed to him a sudden withdrawal of his fame. The post-war poets were so intent upon making poetry out of their self-conscious humiliations and angry resentments (in itself a laudable aim) and in experimenting with suitable forms, that they and their admirers proceeded to label all literature that reflected desirable life, all poetry that celebrated pleasure without a tang of bitterness, "escapist"—perhaps the most misdirecting term yet added to the vocabulary of critical jargon. As though Art itself was not an "escape," a way of creating something more worthy of contemplation than reality affords, even when, as in tragedy, the elements from which a work is made are pain, defeat and death! Davies was labelled an "escapist"; dismissed as a "Georgian nature poet," who wrote songs about staring at robins, butterflies and cows. Nevertheless, some of his poverty-poems are among the best of our times. True, they are more pitiful than indignant, but they are marked by a natural directness of sympathy which is sometimes lacking in the more indignant outbursts of face-the-facts poets—"The Sleepers" is an example.

Since one of my objects in writing is to remove the idea that his scope was narrow, I will quote in conclusion a poem called "A Fleeting Passion":

> Thou shalt not laugh, thou shalt not romp,
> Let's grimly kiss with bated breath;
> As quietly and solemnly
> As Life when it is kissing Death.
> Now in the silence of the grave,
> My hand is squeezing that soft breast;
> While thou dost in such passion lie,
> It mocks me with its look of rest.
>
> But when the morning comes at last,
> And we must part, our passions cold,
> You'll think of some new feather, scarf
> To buy with my small piece of gold;
> And I'll be dreaming of green lanes,
> When little things with beating hearts
> Hold shining eyes between the leaves,
> Till men with horses pass, and carts.

Excellent as that is as a poetic rendering of lust's euthanasia and depth and its irrelevance to the rest of life, he has excelled still more in expressing with a quaint and graceful literalness the gratitude of love.

One is glad to think that before he died he saw all his poems collected (Cape, 7*s.* 6*d.*), and one hopes he knew that many knew he was an English classic.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

COUNTRY NOTES

October Gardens

THE day is approaching when the garden must be cleared, for the summer is over and little but a sodden mass remains. Whether one clears for the vegetables or for the flowers of next year makes no difference: the dying stalks, the rotting annuals, all must pile into the barrow and be wheeled away to the rubbish heap. Still one hesitates, clinging to the last shreds of colour until the rain finally sogs them or the first frost turns them to the soot of wet cinders. It is surprising what a lot of colour still persists. Without much searching, it is still possible to fill the room with August. The stubborn zinnia, the velvet

salpiglossis, the confetti-like nemesia, the Japanese pinks, the marigolds, all lurk as bright as ever among the blackened mat of decay. And apart from the annuals, apart even from the flowers whose sad season this is—the dahlias, the chrysanthemums, the asters—there are many which choose the early autumn to give a second blooming. Among these, some of the musk roses stand out; and as a word of advice to those who feel that they must in future rely on something which gives the maximum of reward for the minimum of trouble I would say: Expend what shillings you can afford on a few bushes of hybrid musks. They need no care beyond an occasional cutting out of weak or dead shoots, and in return they will grow into bushes several feet thick and high, smothered for weeks round midsummer by strongly scented flowers. Not all of them will repeat their performance as lavishly in autumn, but the one I have in mind can be depended upon to do so: the prolific Penelope, whose branches just now are bending towards the ground again with the weight of blossom. The little butter-yellow Danaë is flowering likewise, and so is Callisto, but neither of these is so good for cutting as Penelope, whose tight, pointed buds continue to open endlessly in water and keep the bunch furnished with colour for days, expanding from the deep pink of the bud into the shell pink of the open flower.

Another free giver of both summer and autumn is the shrubby *Mimulus glutinosus*, with its glossy dark leaves and trumpet-shaped flowers of a rare deep buff. The catalogues say that in warm places it will attain a height of four feet, but I have seen it growing in Devonshire against a wall quite eight feet high. I should not like to say from memory when it first started to flower here this summer, but I do not think it can have been later than the end of June and it has never been without flowers since, not just a few, meanly produced, but generously all up the stems. Even now the supply shows no signs of going off; there are many buds still to come, which I discover will open in water as readily as the buds of the winter jasmine. Unfortunately this real treasure is not quite hardy, though I daresay it would survive a reasonable winter with a little protection, and those who cannot arrange to dig it up and winter it under glass would have to keep it going by means of cuttings. These strike easily, and by the following summer will have reached flowering size. It is so well worth the trouble entailed, that I wonder it is not to be found in every garden.

Saffron

The grass is full of the meadow-saffron, a true autumn flowerer, whom some call colchicum but others prefer to call Naked Ladies. It would be hard to find a bulb more impatient to fulfil its function, or one more wayward in its behaviour. As for its impatience, leave it in its paper bag a day too long before planting, and on going to fetch it next morning you may find it in full flower, independent of roots or soil. As for its waywardness, Gerard in his Herbal observed that it did a thing clean contrary to all other plants whatsoever, bringing forth its leaves in February, its seed in May, and its flowers in September, so that he thought it might fittingly be called in English The Son before the Father.

The meadow saffron is now a native of England, having been brought (it is said) by a pilgrim from the East in the reign of Edward III. John Evelyn would not have been without a saffron ball to crush into his salad, and many a canary might have moulted himself bald for lack of a pinch in his drinking water. It is not for either of these purposes that I grow it, nor yet to sleep in a bed of saffron which is said to induce cheerfulness, but for the sake of the bare purple goblets standing up in the grass under the red apples. Purple, yes, for although the native species is only of a small delicate mauve there are varieties such as Bornmulleri which demand the adjective. How they increase, too! I have counted sixteen goblets this year springing from a single bulb, fourteen from another, which means, I suppose, that there are numerous offsets hiding underground and that I must dig them up to extend these Tyrian pools yet further under the apple trees.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

THE RITZKRIEG PAPERS—II

LORD BOTTLENECK'S SECRET INSTRUCTIONS

[Lord Bottleneck ("Corker" to his friends) prides himself on the fact that prior to his appointment in the Ministry of Infamy, he had no previous experience of Propaganda. "My main interest was in sheep," he confessed.—ED.]

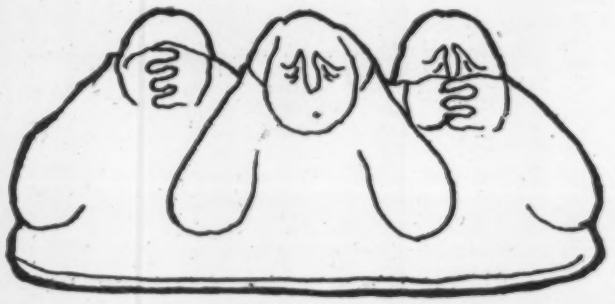
1. Do not forget that there is so much support for Our Cause (or, at any rate, there ought to be) that detailed explanation or justification of anything is quite unnecessary.

2. You will have to be prepared to be the object of pestering attentions from neutral journalists. It should be borne in mind, however, that the number of neutral countries is rapidly diminishing, and with it, presumably, the number of neutral journalists. As for American journalism, we all know what that is like from our occasional visits to the cinema.

LORD BOTTLENECK WITH AN AMENDED MS.

3. You will find the General Public very importunate over the matter of news, but it does not look well to give way to popular clamour. By giving Tom, Dick and Harry lots of news and pictures, you are simply *pampering* them. Anyhow, most of the demand comes from busybodies, Leftists, etc., who want to turn the news to their own subversive ends. So don't give it 'em.

4. In cases of indecision, loss of nerve, giddiness, etc., repeat to yourself the old adage of the Wise Monkeys: "I see no news, I hear no news, I speak no news."



"I SEE NO NEWS—I HEAR NO NEWS—I SPEAK NO NEWS"
STANDARD PAPER-WEIGHT FOR ALL THE 1066 DESKS IN THE MIN. OF INFAMY.

5. Remember that statements likely to cause alarm and despondency, doubt and misapprehension, etc., must on no account be made by private citizens, but only by authorised persons such as yourself.

6. As for news-items of a non-military nature, remember that the Old Guard looks to you to keep them in the public eye. A divorce is still news if it is from *Debrett*, even on one side. The Knight Life of London, the Hell-Morocco, Stark Club, Pairodice Club, etc., are often supported by Our Sort. Many people still want to read about the grousing of the well-to-do, even in wartime.

Propaganda

Discourage the use of the word. Most Right-thinking people instinctively mistrust it.

It conjures up *either* the Nazi's tissue of streaming lies in *Die Stormer*, *or* equally monstrous editorials in *Depravda*. It evokes visions of paid agitators and dilemmagogues spouting in Jekyll-and-Hyde Park under the very portals of the Portchester, and of catchpenny pamphlets thrust under our noses, foul blows struck by the Straight-Left Book Club, etc.

The word "politics" is equally misleading. The Old Guard Englishman, *Our Man*, the sort we shall wish to encourage, does not like to think in terms of "politics" but of politicians, Lord Boldwin, Mr. Leslie Burglin, Mr. Sudson, Sir Horrors Wilson, etc. He does not wish to understand "politics." * He only wishes life to go on as it was before. Therefore we must assure him that the New World for which we are fighting will be very like the Old which he enjoyed so much. "For," he says, "the Old is better. . . ."

Above all, discourage all this careless talk about War-Aims and Peace-Aims. Ever since I unveiled the Silent Column I have been the subject of unfair columny. But I am convinced that I am Right. There is an Old Guard proverb which is as true to-day as ever. It goes "*Wag the flag and not the tongue.*" The tongue must be kept in the cheek.

MICHAEL BARSLEY

(To be concluded)

* "I do not know what a Fascist is," said an octogenarian Peer recently, when attacking *The Daily Walkover*. Sancta simplicitas!

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Saloon Bar," at the Gaumont
"The Front Line"

British films are the week's best. They prove again the rule that we can compete in a world-market with two types of film : the murder story and the documentary short. Walter Forde has taken over from the stage an adequate plot and has wallowed in the setting. A saloon bar with its cascade of talk round a murder gave him all the encouragement he needed ; he has decorated it comically, racily, richly. Perhaps the atmosphere is a little overladen—Christmas Eve, a murder, and Gordon Harker at his ripest coincide—but the detail has been sought lovingly and with exactitude. Just so, at different times, we have seen the young couple in the cubby-hole entranced by endless autobiography and port ; the doleful Regular, who enters at opening time and sits on a stool drinking glasses of his usual with tortoise-like endeavour until They Close ; the Guv'nor, with waxed moustache and shirt sleeves, answering distractedly, "Mine's a gin," while his wife upstairs expects again ; the magniloquent bookie ("Wotcher, me old cocks") ; the plant on a tripod in the corner ; the gilt lettering across mirrors. The only shade of a mistake is that in this pub the glasses aren't served brimful. Even the actors seem to enjoy getting their parts exactly right. Gordon Harker, of course, is the bookie and exploits the dialects from Bayswater to Bow ; Mervyn Johns as the Regular gives a dream of a performance—let us hope that this admirable character actor will be given a real chance in English films. And the others, down to the barmaid in snaky satin and the round-mouthed, round-eyed carollers, are perfectly in the picture. This is a modest and endearing film.

The Front Line has been produced for the Ministry of Information by the G.P.O. Film Unit, and to anyone who has seen their previous war documentaries that is recommendation enough. It shows us Dover—a town we think of now as being in front of the front line—still standing, still busy and even cheerful as it goes about its business. Yes, this is a *cheerful* film despite twisted frameworks and areas of rubble ; its inhabitants cock a friendly eye at the camera and talk briskly. It is difficult to imagine any audience, however bomb-weary, not being heartened by the ten minutes or so of *The Front Line*. Between this encouragement and the facetious pep-talk of the newsreels there is a world of difference.

Wartime Ballet, at the Arts Theatre

The Lunch Ballet at the Arts Theatre, which was started as an experiment a week or two ago, has been such a success that a determined balletomane can now settle in, after an early lunch or a snack at the bar, and by staying till tea-time see three separate performances. The combined London and Rambert Ballets alternate with Keith Lester's Arts Ballet ; this week it has been the turn of the latter. That the public appreciates being able to see such a varied programme and so many talented dancers for one shilling was obvious from the very mixed character of the audience and the enthusiasm of its applause. Each performance ends with a longer ballet, but with the exception of *Casse-Noisette*, always delightful and always a favourite, they were not so successful as the shorter pieces—perhaps because of the narrow bounds of the Arts stage. This drawback seemed particularly marked in *Concerto*, an ambitious work to Mozart's music, which nevertheless had moments that were very satisfying. Keith Lester, its choreographer, danced well in the chief part, but his rather lethargic technique was a contrast to the vivacity and finish of his *premières danseuses*, Helene Wolska and Prudence Hyman. Of the other items, especially pleasing were Harold Turner's *Rush Hour*, and *Polka* 1845, danced with verve and wit by Alexis Rassine and Molly Lake. There were no surprises on Monday, such as occurred a fortnight ago when Travis Kemp discarded battle-dress for a couple of hours to dance in *Giselle* with undiminished skill, but it was an altogether enjoyable afternoon. A stranger observed on the way out that there was "an astonishing lot of talent knocking about," and added, "It's a credit to the nation the way these ballet-dancers keep going in such times." It was impossible not to agree.

A Dance Recital at Dartington Hall

The Dartington Hall Theatre, as the stage of the Ballets Jooss and the Jooss-Leeder Dance School, had accustomed us to a high standard of perfection ; but with both Jooss and Leeder interned one was justified in expecting a much less perfect performance from the remnant of the dance-school which has gone on working under the direction of Pem Becker who, like the majority of the remaining students, is Dutch. On the contrary, the dance-recital we saw there recently, far from being inferior, was almost the best student performance we ever remember to have seen at Dartington. Not only was it far better than any other dance school, classical or "modern," could produce of its own initiative (and for this we have the authority of our finest English choreographer, who happened to be present) but it would provide an excellent entertainment for a London stage, and it is greatly to be hoped that it will be performed outside Dartington, so that the now scattered dance-loving public of London may have a chance of seeing it, as well as the inhabitants of South-West England. The programme was entirely the work of the students, who chose the music, and composed and produced the dances. The programme included *Aubade* and *Alla Spagnola ;* a group dance, *Murder in the Cathedral ; The Inconsolable*, to music by Satie, and *Peasant Woodcut*, to music by Bartok.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, October 12th—
Fabian Society Lecture, Harold Nicolson : "World Government," Central Hall, 2.15.
Re-opening of Morley College, Westminster Bridge Road. Classes will be held on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings and afternoons.

SUNDAY, October 13th—
John Katz : "I Believe in Man," Conway Hall, 11.

MONDAY, October 14th—
Fabian International Affairs Group Snack-lunch Meeting., Wenzel Jaksch : "Can Europe Revolt ?" Trade Union Club, 12 Great Newport Street, 1. Tickets, 1*s.* 6*d.*
Poetry Reading by Marjorie Gullan, Central Hall, 1.15. Collection in aid of British Red Cross.

Correspondence

THE CEMENT HOLD-UP

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to your issue of September 28th in which you state :—

"For years past the cement ring—The Cement Makers' Federation, of which the big Associated Portland Cement combine is the most powerful member—has been engaged in restricting output in order to keep up prices and profits. As late as the summer of 1939, for instance, incredible as it may seem, Associated Cement bought up a factory in Durham and closed it down. Lord Wolmer (then Chairman of the Cement Makers Federation) made a speech in the previous November deploring the 'surplus capacity' in the trade."

I am sure it is not your desire to misrepresent facts, and I therefore ask for space in which to correct the above quoted mis-statements.

It is untrue that the Cement Makers' Federation has been engaged in restricting output in order to keep up prices and profits. I give the Home Trade Deliveries of the Cement Industry during the last ten years, and the 4-ton schedule price in London on January 1st of each of these years. In addition, there was an export trade of about 600,000 tons :

Year	Cement Deliveries	Price
1929	3,283,290	51/-
1930	3,506,743	51/-
1931	4,184,432	46/-
1932	3,429,995	46/-
1933	4,107,918	46/-
1934	4,935,491	46/-
1935	5,267,574	40/-
1936	6,043,764	39/-
1937	6,606,137	39/-
1938	6,963,212	42/-
1939	7,570,459	42/-

These figures speak for themselves, and they show that it has been the consistent policy of the Cement Industry to reduce prices, with the result that deliveries steadily increased. The increase in productive capacity between the years 1937 and 1939 was no less than 2½ million tons. The price rise in 1938 was due to increased cost of coal, and since the outbreak of war prices have risen (with Government sanction) for similar reasons.

It is untrue that Associated Cement in 1939 bought a factory in Durham and closed it down. The Warren Cement Works, Ltd. (which had the very small annual output of 33,000 tons) went into liquidation early in 1939 because its machinery was obsolete and its site uneconomic ; and it was, therefore, unable to make a profit at the low cement prices ruling. Associated Cement acquired only the sales connection after the works had been closed down. I think that if the Cement Industry had endeavoured to keep up prices in order to enable obsolete works to function, it would have earned the censure of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION and rightly so.

It is true that I made a speech in November, 1938, stating that the capacity of the Cement Industry was in excess of demand, and that was absolutely true at the time, and continued to be true until three months ago. During the early part of this year, a large part of British cement works were idle. There is to-day a temporary shortage of cement, but it would be untrue and misleading to say that the capacity of the Cement Industry is, even to-day, inadequate for the normal demand. Let me give an analogy. If everybody in England suddenly wanted three times as much coal as they usually consumed, there would be a temporary shortage of coal, but that would not mean that England was inadequately supplied with coal mines. That is the position in regard to cement. Quite suddenly a great demand has occurred in many different directions besides A.R.P. The Cement Industry is coping with this demand in accordance with the instructions of the Government whose duty it is, as you properly observe, "to decide how we use our considerable output of cement just as much as our output of steel and aluminium." This is exactly what the Government have been doing ever since the war started.

I am sure that you will be glad to have the above information, because instead of restricting output in order to keep up prices, as stated by you, the facts are that the production has been substantially increased and prices reduced.

WOLMER
Chairman.

Cement Makers' Federation,
Terminal House,
52 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W.1.

[We are glad to print Lord Wolmer's letter. Our reply appears in this week's Comments.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

BILLETING AND EVACUATION

SIR,—May I add a word to your article, "Report on East London"? I believe that it is not compulsory evacuation that is needed but, as a first step, compulsory billeting. At the present time the chances of the "homeless" evacuee being tolerably happy are altogether too small.

This is the story, as it was told to me at a rest centre (a school sheltering 250 homeless) in a N.W. borough. Eighty "homeless" from the East End were sent there on the understanding that they would continue their journey to the country within 24 hours. As nothing happened, 23 got on the bus and returned to the East End. At the end of a

fortnight billets for 17 had been found and 40 remained, subject to air raids practically as fierce as those they experienced in the East End. Again I was told in the East End that the day before my visit two buses had arrived to evacuate some "homeless" to a vulnerable S.W. district. Only a handful agreed to go.

As you say, there is need of a single authority, but the whole principle of this piecemeal evacuation of the homeless is wrong. To have any hope of success, buses should arrive each morning in the East End (and in many boroughs outside the East End) ready to take the homeless from the one borough to a previously announced reception area, scheduled as the reception area for that borough. The business of sorting out could then be done at the rest centre within the reception area. If this were done, the voluntary evacuation of mothers and children would have some chance of success, as they would know that they would be kept together as well as meeting old friends. Yet without compulsory billeting this cannot be done.

An essential corollary would be the setting-up of community centres—Poplar-in-Biggleswade—for the use of evacuees in the reception areas. Probably it would be necessary to have several centres in each area, but in any case the scheme would help to abolish the saddest sight of all, the "homeless" sitting on hard chairs in rest centres, waiting to be told that Mrs. Brown is going to John o' Groats and Mrs. Jones to Land's End.

The Fortnightly, JOHN ARMITAGE
13 Buckingham Street,
London, W.C.2.

SIR,—Among the less thoughtful of the inhabitants of the "safe" areas (presumably, therefore, not among your profound subscribers) it has recently been often heard that, in the opinion of the self-appointed judges, the refugees from London are not clean, that they have no manners, and that they smell. The implication being that it is a fault in the refugees, an inherent inhumanity of the species, that is the cause of these undoubted shortcomings.

Since this implication is in most cases unjust, and since the judges may, after all, include *some* of your readers, I beg of you to let me make the following points clear, since no other pen has undertaken the task.

First, that the well-worn phrase saying that soap is cheap is only relatively true.

Second, that, given soap, you must, if you live high in a tenement, descend and ascend many stairs to collect water, for running water is supplied only to the ground floor or basement.

Third, that the water, thus collected, must, to be used to its best advantage, be heated, at the expense of costly fuel.

Fourth, that the so-called sanitary arrangements are usually at least as distant as the water supply, and are scarcely inviting when reached.

Finally, I would plead that the thoughtless and selfrighteously-washed people who class the East-enders and other dwellers in slums as inhuman should pause a moment before passing judgment to consider first how they would fare on a like income (say 35*s*. for Mr. and Mrs. and six children) and in like dwellings.

The remedies are, of course, obvious, but since they have in the past been neglected, let us at least have the grace to apologise for this neglect by showing a little more understanding and a little more hospitality than is being shown in the reception areas at present.

Guildford. PINK (SAFE AREA) PROVINCIAL

REPORT ON EAST LONDON

SIR,—Your moving and constructive report of conditions in the East End resulting from enemy air attack is marred, I feel, by your ungenerous lack of recognition of the great services rendered by the *Daily Worker* and by the Communist Party in drawing public *and official* attention to those conditions—and even more, in organising or inspiring *direct action* by the victims of those conditions to secure some measure of amelioration.

It may be that you assumed that all readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION were readers also of the *Daily Worker*—an assumption for which, unfortunately, there seems no foundation—but if that were so I feel certain that you would not have expected them to swallow your statement that "*the Communist Party is much discredited.*" Cannot you have the decency to admit, whatever may be your views on Communist action in other connections, that in this matter the Communist Party were by a long way first in the field, that the policy which it has advocated from the first has been proved a sound one, and that without its initiative and drive matters would now be very much worse than they actually are? EDGAR P. YOUNG,
61 Upper Berkeley Street, Commander, R.N.
London, W.1. (Retired)

[Full credit was given in our issue of September 21st to the Communist Party for being in the forefront of the struggle for deep shelters. They were not alone in this demand; indeed, Professor Haldane's argument was nowhere more strongly pressed in 1938-9 than in this journal. But we are correct in saying that even the *Daily Worker* failed to give any full picture of the East End situation, which it has dealt with as an example of a thesis about society rather than as a problem which could and should be solved here and now.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

THE LESSON OF DAKAR

SIR,—The failure to capture Dakar for General de Gaulle's movement is a great blow to the cause of freedom. Dakar is a French West African port of the highest strategic importance.

Now why did General de Gaulle have to call it off? The explanations given are two-fold. One, de Gaulle claims that he was expressly released from any obligation to fight his own countrymen; two, in the view of our Government the Pétain Government was not considered to be an enemy. The Pétain Government supplied an immediate answer to these excuses, they sent hundreds of French planes over from French Morocco and soundly bombed Gibraltar.

I think that the failure to take Dakar was due to an unhappy political outlook. How can we encourage revolt in the French Colonies for General de Gaulle who has been disowned and insulted by the Pétain Government if we declare this same Government not to be our enemy? I think that the whole political tangle involved could be sorted out if the following line of action was adopted, and it would be interesting to have readers' comments:

It should be clearly stated by the Government that we are fighting to liberate the peoples of Europe from Fascist tyranny and that when this tyranny has been smashed we shall invite the liberated peoples to join us in a democratic European Federation and rebuild civilisation on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. It should be declared without any shilly shallying that we regard the co-operation of the French people as indispensable and the offer of Anglo-French Union as still standing. General de Gaulle should then be asked to declare where he stands with regard to our policy. When his answer was received, we should then know where we stood. HOWARD FOX.

Federal Union,
44 Gordon Square,
London, W.C.1.

CAT AND MOUSE

SIR,—During the last war many Conscientious Objectors were subjected to "cat-and-mouse" treatment by the authorities because of their refusal to accept military service, being arrested, released and re-arrested, spending their time being harried in and out of prison. Before the passing of the Conscription Acts, pledges were given in Parliament that the authorities would not again pursue such a course, not entirely out of regard for the rights of the individual conscience, but from the more practical point of view that the events of the last war had shown that there were certain people whose religious convictions were not to be shaken, and who could not, in effect, be bullied or brow-beaten into submission. The net result of such treatment was merely the fraying of tempers, and the loss to the community of the services of men of ability, who because they would not serve in the Army were not allowed to serve at all.

Section 13 of the National Service (Armed Forces) Act, 1939, was presumably framed with the above facts in mind, but a grave defect in the Act is now becoming apparent. Briefly, Section 13 provides that if a C.O. is sentenced by court-martial to a term of three months' imprisonment he may appeal a second time to the Appeal Tribunal. The Act also provides penalties for those who refuse to submit to a Medical Examination (Section 3, sub-sections 4, 5), but has no provision for those who refuse as a consequence of their position as C.O.'s such as that contained in Section 13.

Recently, Mr. John Archibald of Bolton, a C.O., appeared before the magistrates for refusal to submit to a medical examination—I quote a newspaper report:

> The magistrates made an order that Archibald be arrested, taken to Strangeways prison, and detained there until he had undergone a medical examination. The order gave power for him to be escorted before a medical board from time to time for examination if necessary, and provided that the maximum period for detention in prison should be six months.

I see nothing to suggest that Mr. Archibald may not be re-arrested at the end of the six months, assuming that he has not submitted to examination. Does not this case, in fact, give cause to fear that the "cat-and-mouse" treatment may be beginning all over again?

Surely if the Government wishes to carry out the spirit of the Section and to implement previous pledges, Mr. Archibald, and others who may find themselves in his position, will be granted the right of appeal similar to that conferred by Section 13. If not, the claim of the authorities to respect the rights of individual conscience must fall to the ground. C. ROWBOTHAM

INTERNEES

SIR,—In spite of the hardship and rough treatment endured by refugees, to which your paper has constantly called attention, the most trying part of the problem both to those who are interned and those who are trying to help them is, in most cases, the lack of reason in grounds for internment, and the vague and inconsistent policy with regard to release.

If the large number of refugees now in internment camps are being kept there merely because no means can be found of ascertaining whether they are a danger to this country or not, then no refugee should be released at all. But as a number of those whose work is of national importance or who have outstanding ability *have* been released, it follows that some means of assessing the potential danger of an internee is considered to exist. Ability to do important work can obviously be no guarantee of integrity.

While the claims of those who can contribute to the most urgent needs of the country's war effort must come first, is there any reason why the cases of the remaining thousands of refugees, many of whom are able to do useful and needed work, should not receive equal attention? If there is a reason should not those inside and out of the camps be told what it is? S. M. GROVES

AN APOLOGY

SIR,—In justice to the Czech Grvernment I would be gratified if you would publish an explanation and an apology.

The strictures on their army Laws relating to the marriage of their members with British women were uncalled for and due to a wrong interpretation of classes designed to prevent precipitate marriages of parties of very short acquaintance.

A. B. DOWSON.

"THE CATHOLIC-LATIN MYTH"

SIR,—Mr. W. Horsfall Carter's article on "The Catholic-Latin Myth" reads into the Catholic Press of this country "a pathetic attempt to reconcile an attitude of faith, hope and charity with regard to the new France . . . with the patent fact that Marshal Pétain and company are entirely under Nazi domination."

But the same day's issue of *The Tablet* contains a violent letter beginning: "I have noticed week after week your persistence in attacking what you call, no doubt with contempt, the Vichy Government." The *Catholic Times* of September 27th, again, had an article entitled "Are Catholics Hitler's Mouthpiece?" which dealt with the Latin bloc scare and warned British Catholics that an anti-Catholic propaganda was to be foreseen, since there were still people who could not bear to think that a Catholic could be patriotic. The *Catholic Herald*, moreover, has consistently urged in its editorials that *all* the Totalitarianisms are anathema, since they deny the principles for which Christianity stands. The Nazi attack on religion is covert, the Soviet attack overt, the Fascist attack cautious;

and we have chapter and verse for Vatican condemnation of all three.

Mr. Horsfall Carter records very fairly the Catholic revival in France during the last decade, with its "Christian-Social leaven." He mentions also, with approval, the Sword of the Spirit Movement recently launched by Cardinal Hinsley under the leadership of Christopher Dawson—though he dismisses this as non-significant and proceeds to deal with José Pemartin's book on the dream of a Catholic-Latin bloc destined to evangelise a Germanised Europe. Since he (very rightly) designates this as "fantastic and hyperbolic twaddle," it was hardly necessary to devote a third of his article to it.

The truth is that the Catholics of this country, while united in praying for the triumph of Christianity, are free to be divided on whether this or that political means is the best means. Thus we were united in praying for the triumph of Christianity over atheism in Spain, but divided as to whether the Franco Movement was in fact likely to achieve it. We are still politically as "Left" or as "Right" as our individual opinion prescribes; but we are solidly behind the Cardinal in his Catholic, British, patriotic stand.

This does not mean that we repudiate our Catholic press on the Latin-Catholic bloc discussion. For the Catholic press is not in fact doing what Mr. Horsfall Carter says it is. And the single sentence that he quotes from Christopher Hollis certainly darkens counsel; for the whole point of Mr. Hollis's article was to remind us that the Church is against Totalitarianism of whatever kind, and that in concentrating at the moment on the Nazi version we must not *forget* the Soviet version—which the (at the time) flirting with the idea of a Soviet-British alliance seemed to suggest.

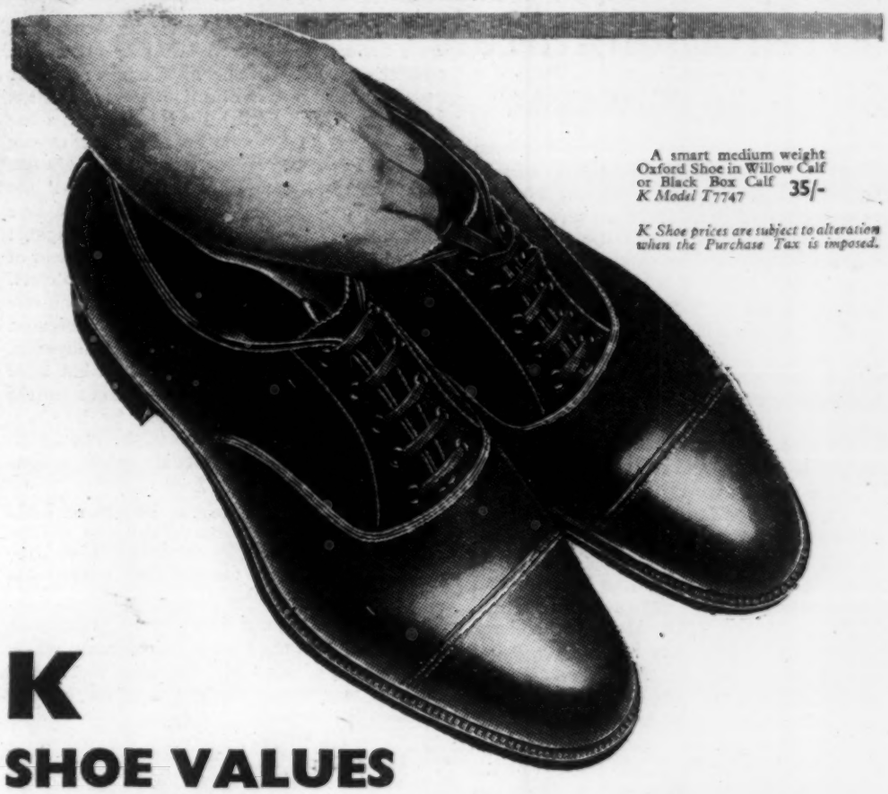
University of London A. C. F. BEALES
King's College.

"COME WHAT MAY"

SIR,—After enduring the daily spate of bomblastic—a word which I present to the language—conversation, it was a real treat to read Cyril Joad's entertaining and discerning review of my book. It was generous of you to give so much space to an author with whose views you must disagree, but those views are not quite so outrageous as Mr. Joad would have you believe. I do not maintain that almost all intellectuals are cowards, but that, on the balance, intellectuals are less courageous than non-intellectuals, nor did I assert that great Art is only possible in a world in which the warrior is in supreme control or that Art languishes in time of peace. I do not think that Mr. Clive Bell would seriously quarrel with what I did say. "Modern Europe can produce no art to set beside the supreme achievements of feudal Europe or feudal Japan, the Europe in which not the intellectual prototype of Mr. H. G. Wells, but the warrior was in supreme control." As I defended Distributism at great length, Mr. Joad should not have accused me of being "blind to the injustice of Capitalism and deaf to the appeal of its victims," for Distributism is more revolutionary than Socialism in its approach to these problems. My remedy differs from Mr. Joad's, but that is no reason for suggesting that I am indifferent to the sufferings of the patient. But I am grateful to Mr. Joad for a review which proves that, even in these days, men may differ profoundly and yet continue to regard each other with affection and respect.

I cannot trace any passage in which I said that Hitler and Mussolini derive their authority from the votes of the people. If I said this, I was wrong. I have lived for two years in Italy and paid long visits to the country in October, December, March and May of the first year of the war. Mussolini's popularity was declining sharply up to the outbreak of the war, recovered when he kept Italy out of war and began to sag badly in March. Outside those Fascists with good jobs, I doubt if one Italian in twenty has his heart in this war. I met many Germans during a wartime journey through the Balkans, Italy and Switzerland and kept careful notes of conversations with them. Apart from Nazis with vested interests in the regime—and most of those would rat if Hitler's position was seriously menaced, not more than one German in three was a convinced supporter of the régime in the last month of peace. Hitler's popularity increased rapidly after the Polish campaign, only to sink again sharply when victory over Poland did not bring peace.

The Athenaeum. ARNOLD LUNN



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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THERE are fashions in men. There has been the man of wit, there has been the man of feeling, there has been the gentleman; now the Plain Man is the arbiter. He is one who signifies agreement in the usual manner by putting his foot down. He is a very plain fellow indeed. Who is he and how did he get his authority? You always know who he is because he tells you: "I'm a Plain Man." As for his authority he just took it. He woke up in a world of specialists and the sensation was one of loneliness, bewilderment, inferiority; someone, everyone was trying to put something across him. In a world of experts he made a virtue of his lack of knowledge and fell back upon a large inheritance of *idées reçues*. And it has turned out to be quite good fun. Open your paper any day and you will find specialisation has created the characteristic and hopeless row of our time in which the expert is seen using his brain and the Plain Man his foot.

In literature the Plain Man has a large nuisance value. I have been reading Mr. Roger Dataller's *The Plain Man and the Novel* (Nelson, 2s. 6d.), a shrewd, readable if vague and jaunty book which is designed to lead the Plain Man to the literary well; the impression I get from it is that you may lead the Plain Man there but you will not persuade him to drink. He is not likely to read very many of the novels of the last thirty years anyway. According to Mr. Dataller, the Plain Man must have "a story." That disposes at once of Mrs. Woolf and many others. Then, on the whole, he prefers "static" characters to those which change and develop, for the majority of people with whom the Plain Man, in his plain way, is acquainted are "normal," i.e., do not develop. He wants "heroes" and "villains." He also wants "sin." But not sexual "sin." He feels very plainly about sex, especially when "a certain type of writer" regards misalliance "as an accepted thing." Life, "in his experience," he says, is not like that. And one must admit that, according to the newspapers, the wives of Plain Men who hate "this continual talk about sex," substitute arsenic and revolver bullets for discussion; an action which the decadent, ill-adjusted modern novelist, "the playboy of marriage," would be too unrealistic to perform.

And it is much the same with politics and social conflict: "The Plain Man is told that great issue is joined and battle proceeding, that a life-and-death struggle is in progress and that he must prepare himself for the conflict. All this the Plain Man finds very difficult to conceive." The anti-gossip movement has evidently been very thorough. It is clear that Mr. Dataller's Plain Man must find not only the contemporary novel incomprehensible, but even the daily newspaper. In the past thirty years the world has utterly changed; the changes and the stresses they have created in thought and feeling have been reflected in literature; but Plain Man River just goes rolling along as if nothing had happened. And he gets very irritable—"I'm only a Plain Man but . . ."—if you hint to him that something has happened, and that he is living on an inherited capital of prejudices, that his Plainness is all a pose and his Simplicity the mark of the grotesque. He would be astonished—no, he would probably be flattered—to know that in every generation he has been the secret enemy of writers and literature.

Mr. Dataller does not think so. Identifying himself with the "common sense" of the Plain Man whose view, it may be remarked, is uncommonly close to that of Hitler about art or Goebbels on writing, he appears to be saying that it is the writers who are the enemies of literature. Exactly what a writer may or may not do is difficult to discover. He may preach the emancipation of the negro (Harriet Beecher Stowe), but he may not preach the emancipation of women (H. G. Wells), for the common sense about sex is that, to be homely, "you cannot have your cake and eat it," nor is social injustice an altogether acceptable subject, for "the majority" of people, in his experience, love their jobs. The writer must not be discouraging; it does not matter that the suicide at the end of *Brave New World* was symbolically correct. The plain fact to the Plain Man is that no one he knows has ever committed suicide because he was unable to stand scientific civilisation. (One wonders if any of the Plain Men have noticed that those who can stand scientific civilisation sometimes get killed by bombs?) What the writer is faced with in the Plain Man is a literal mind. Mr. Dataller quotes a conversation from *Women in Love*:

> Do you think that creation depends on *man!* It merely doesn't. There are the trees and the grass and the birds. I much prefer to think of the lark rising up in the morning upon a humanless world. Man is a mistake, he must go.

The Plain Man's gorge rises; surely plainness is eternal? "It is the kind of conversation which leads nowhere," says Mr. Dataller's foot. And his taste may be negatively defined by the final aversion in this book:

> Upon the fringes of fiction dance and toss a number of the unclassified novels that attract a certain amount of attention because they are associated with nothing whatever save the individual idiosyncrasy of the author. Your own life and action are not affected in the least by having read them. They have stimulated neither a sense of duty nor a proper regard for one's fellows. They are the products of self-interest and self-absorption. The Plain Man will learn to recognise these writings for what they are.

Goodbye *Tristram Shandy!* Farewell *Wuthering Heights!*

Mr. Dataller may reply that he did not set out to write an essay on literary criticism but by discussion of such classifications as the detective novel, the historical novel, the autobiographical novel, the rural and social novels, etc., to lead the Plain Man through the maze of modern fiction, flattering his prejudices perhaps—for the conceit of the Plain Man is considerable—in order to get the tip of his nose into a book. If this is so, it is remarkable how very few modern novelists are acceptable to Mr. Dataller and how confused and arbitrary are his categories. The thriller is entirely missing and, of course, so is all fantasy. There is nothing about the Comic or the Psychological. The only French novel treated at length is *Jean Christophe*, as an example of literary internationalism. *Passage to India* appears surprisingly under the heading of Social Problems. You would not suppose Mr. Wells ever wrote *Kipps* and *Mr. Polly*. Such waywardness is inevitable when the critic discards some system of general ideas—how unfavourably Mr. Dataller's book compares with Ralph Fox's dogmatic *The Novel and the People* or Mr. G. U. Ellis's eclectic and sensitive *Twilight on Parnassus*—and floats out on the chartless sea of "the reader's point of view."

Part of the Plain Man's reluctant head-scratching before the playbill of the modern novel is due of course to the time lag in public taste. And there is a class-lag as well as a time-lag. The Court are gods in the social scale the more old-fashioned taste is—I mean, of course, among those who are not in touch with advanced political societies. The continued popularity of Dickens is due to this time-lag.

Mr. Dataller's own taste is in part catholic: he admires Conrad and James Hanley, but his preference for what is called "normal" means that he likes literal realism best. Arnold Bennett is really, on Mr. Dataller's definition, the ideal writer for the Plain Man. That literal appraising mind, so poor in invention, and yet so sensitive to the gradations of greyness in everyday life, did not require the shocking or disturbing. The Plain Man, according to Mr. Dataller, dislikes ideas, especially new ideas; there were no ideas in Arnold Bennett. He was, as Mr. Dataller says, the novelist of the things of family life. The Plain Man scores a point in his taste for Arnold Bennett, for Bennett had an exceptional sensibility to "ordinary" or "normal" emotion, which is not surpassed by the more esoteric, retrospective writers. In an anthology called *The English in Love*, published some years ago, I was struck by the superiority of Bennett's writing about love to most of the work of the more notorious. Lawrence and Meredith had nothing to equal Bennett's perception and sincerity when he was describing the relation of some prosaic husband and wife, or some halting fiancées.

Does the Plain Man dislike ideas in fiction as much as Mr. Dataller believes? I doubt it. I cannot believe that Mr. Wells is read only by the would-be "playboys of marriage"; indeed, the Plain Man, I think, probably retains from the Victorian dispensation a weakness for sermons. Lawrence's Mexican mysticism may shock the prim or the rational, but to the Wesleyan its heady imagery and tortured aspiration cannot be altogether alien. I have no doubt Mr. Dataller is not really as hostile to "ideologies"—Aunt Sally name for system of ideas—as he affects to be; and that he is not really proposing a new tyranny of Plainness in criticism. And during the last thirty years there has been a sense in which the Plain Man has been right. Neither society nor literature can live on experiment for ever.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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The following passage will give an idea of the high quality of Waterfield's writing and power of observation:

> When I visited the front line defences as war correspondent during those quiet months before May 10th, I found all the commanding officers eager to show off their defence works. On the Rhine, north of Strasbourg, an enthusiastic colonel took me from one concrete emplacement to another; day and night soldiers were feverishly working.
>
> "Fine concrete," he kept on muttering . . . "they'll never get through this! Magnificent concrete!" I asked if the Germans had such good concrete on the other side. . . . "Oh, no," said the colonel, rather coldly. "Nothing like so good."
>
> "Is there any reason," I asked, "why you should not attack to prevent them making their defences stronger?"
>
> The Colonel smiled reprovingly at me as if I had made a blasphemous remark . . .

The next morning, the author looked across to the German lines:

> Across the river a young German was standing in the sun, naked to the waist, washing himself. It annoyed me that it should be possible for him to go on washing calmly there with two machine guns on the opposite bank. I asked the French sentry why he did not fire. He seemed surprised at my bloodthirstiness.
>
> "*Ils ne sont pas méchants*," he said, "and if we fire, they will fire back."

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Such was the fantastic war under which France lived for eight months in a state of blissful ignorance, with its papers dishing out to the public columns about the impregnable Maginot Line, and about the imminent economic collapse of Germany. *Ils ne sont pas méchants.* This, and similar revelations on the state of mind of the French Army during the "phoney" war had to be made sooner or later; and Mr. Waterfield has made them. His account of the final collapse, with the millions of refugees flooding the roads, with German agents pouring into France disguised as Belgian and Dutch fugitives, with the shortage of guns and aeroplanes, and with a general atmosphere of bewilderment, disorganisation and *pagaie*, is profoundly tragic. What makes it even more tragic is Mr. Waterfield's belief that the French people and the individual French soldiers were both brave and sound in their views; and that "if she had been well led, France would have shown as much vitality as she had done during previous national emergencies."

Is that the whole and complete explanation of the French disaster? In his thrilling account of his own flight on board a French bomber, as in many of his other war stories, Mr. Waterfield certainly shows what fine stuff so many of the soldiers and airmen he knew were made of; but he perhaps underestimates the demoralisation of the French public generally; the deeply ingrained aversion to the war; the pacifism that had eaten into the soul of France. The unreasonable optimism and complacency implied in the phrase "*ils ne sont pas méchants*" went far beyond the Maginot Line. What was lacking in the France of 1940 was the profoundly national and essentially anti-German *mystique* of 1914—a faith in the clear individuality of France and her European heritage.

One therefore cannot help treating with some scepticism Mr. Waterfield's view that France could still have been saved from military defeat as late as May 21st, and, even more so, his arguments in favour of a *levée en masse* which would have saved Paris. Arm the people? The people were confused in their minds; not least the working class, who had been largely demoralised by Communist propaganda. The distribution of rifles and revolvers to the working class, and the erection of barricades in the style of 1848 would not have saved Paris. We would have had a repetition of Warsaw, not of Madrid—unless perhaps the entire R.A.F. had gone to France to defend Paris. But the disorganisation of the French Army was too far gone, and the despair among wide sections of civilians too deep. Mr. Waterfield, by the way, does not mention the large-scale desertions from the French Army.

The battle of France was really lost on the Meuse, when what Mr. Waterfield calls "the basket with all the eggs" was smashed. The *revanche* could have been fought, as Reynaud proposed, in North Africa; but this was prevented by the Vichy politicians to whom the thought of fighting Italy—and the war in Africa would have been, primarily, a war against Italy—was intolerable.

One may disagree with a few points of Mr. Waterfield's political diagnosis of the collapse; but as a comment on the military and psychological breakdown of the French war machine his book is of lasting value. There is one point on which laymen have been always in doubt: how many men were really mobilised in France? Why, with "five million men mobilised" should France have had only 45 divisions in the field in June, as against Germany's 120? Mr. Waterfield gives us no clear answer. "Five million men were mobilised prisoners of the General Staff," he says in one place; and, in another, "the British Government must have known that the French had not mobilised, as they said they had, five million men."

ALEXANDER WERTH

THE NOISE OF HISTORY

Basilissa. By JOHN MASEFIELD. *Heinemann.* 8*s.*

The Chosen. By EDITH SIMON. *Lane.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Raven's Wing. By ELIZABETH SPRIGGE. *Macmillan.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

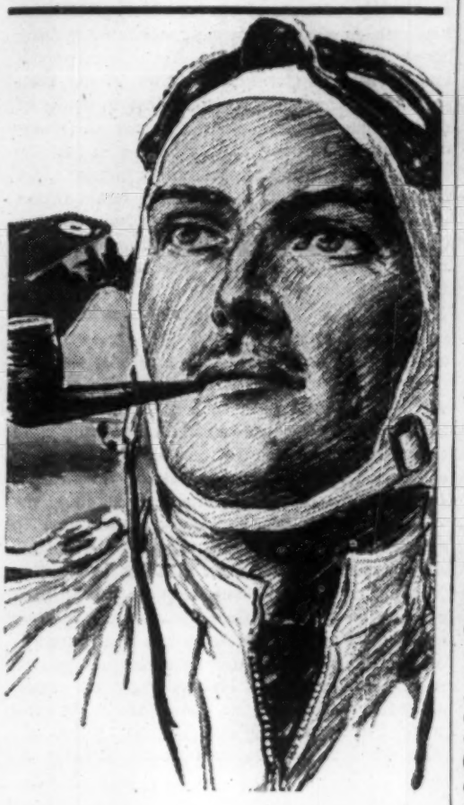
Mr. Bunting. By ROBERT GREENWOOD. *Dent.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Sons of the Others. By PHILIP GIBBS. *Hutchinson.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Some weeks ago Mr. George Orwell, reviewing new novels in these columns, suggested that historical fiction must almost invariably be unsatisfactory since its dialogue and psychology must be either ridiculously theatrical or colloquially anachronistic. "S'death, thou arrant knave, hold silence or thou tasteth my trusty poignard" means much the same as "Shut your face, you sod, or get what's coming," but, used in an historical story, the latter seems out of place and the former quite ridiculous. In the same way the mentality of other periods cannot easily be brought alive, and the outlook of a Tourneur villain, no less than his extraordinary behaviour, is grotesquely alien from our own. Yet, I think, the difficulties are not so great as they appear. Good novels are written about Nazi Germany and semi-savage Mexico; why not, therefore, about Imperial Rome or ancient Gaul? The sensitive reader who deplores modern slang in Elizabethan mouths expects translations from the Russian to be rendered into current English idiom, and will endure without wincing the monstrosities of literary Cockney. Some periods, no doubt, differ so essentially from our own experience that they must always seem artificial, but most of our platitudes have several millenia of hard use behind them. If the historical novelist selects for his background societies similar to our own, but remembers that human nature does, perhaps, change a little, there is no reason for his medium to remain classed with Detection and Wild Westerns as one of fiction's most inferior sub-divisions.

Basilissa is about the youth of the Empress Theodora and the confused intrigues that led to the adoption of Justinian as successor to the Empire, and the acknowledgment of a cast-off ex-courtesan as his legal consort. It is a good story, as many writers have realised, and Mr. Masefield tells it very well. The seditious tumults of Byzantium and the activities of the Imperial Ballet make an admirably coloured background, and although Theodora and Justinian are a little pale, the minor characters—the boorish Emperor, the effete senators, the querulous producer—are depicted with all the author's usual imagination. The movement is swift and easy, the story, for all its familiarity, is told with dramatic effect, and, though there is not much in it, the surface is highly polished. *Basilissa*, in fact, is a good novel; whether it is a good historical novel is not so readily apparent. Its virtues are simple but important. The history is reasonably accurate; and although Justinian is made far braver and more noble than subsequent incidents of his reign would suggest, one should perhaps let Mr. Masefield show enough bias to counter that of Procopius. The introspection and dialogue, too, steer successfully between olde Englishe and modern American, and the conversation has the timeless quality that historical writing demands. But although we are never in twentieth-century London, I do not think we are ever in fifth-century Byzantium. Can we believe that these nice-minded, well-behaved, thoroughly bourgeois people are really riddled with religious intolerance and fanatical heresies, or that a few miles from their smart flats and racing stables saints squat on pillars or run on all fours round caves? Does Mr. Masefield remind us that his bluff old Emperor lived surrounded by mass-produced eunuchs, and that when the wicked

From an R.A.F. Mess Overseas



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With a preface by **T. S. ELIOT.** This is an unusual anthology in that the anonymous author compiled it not for publication, but for his own solace after the loss of an only son. It became known to his friends and others who urged that it should be made public. It consists of selections in prose and verse, from English, Continental, and Oriental literature and scriptures. 8s. 6d.

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Next Thursday

Twice the Clock Round

by the Author of *The Healing Knife*

GEORGE SAVA

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politicians are whisked out of sight in the last chapter, their noses will be slit, their eyes put out and their lives slowly ended in airless and anonymous dungeons? He does not; the Byzantium he shows us is no farther from England than Berlin. This does not necessarily mean that *Basilissa* is a bad historical novel. How many books have been written about our own times, in which there is no mention of war, exploitation, poverty, disease, or even of the protracted and unpleasant deaths that as a matter of course overtake nearly a million people a year in this country alone? If a novel of contemporary life can be taken seriously despite its omission of these sordid but pervasive facts of our civilisation, should not historical fiction be allowed a similar latitude? The answer is probably obvious.

Miss Simon is neither uninterested in, ignorant of, nor squeamish about the cruder aspects of her period, and *The Chosen*, a very lively re-writing of the Book of Exodus, is rich with killings, rapes, tortures and all the other barbarities that make our own complaints about air raids seem more than a little ungrateful. It is possible that the author has exaggerated this side of her subject a little—one almost suspects her of enjoying the horrors she describes—but she does suggest the glare and glitter of ancient Egypt and conveys, as for all his taste and skill Mr. Masefield fails to do, the authentic feeling of an earlier age. The details of her story need little comment. She makes Moses her hero, takes the outline of her plot from the Bible, and inserts as sub-plot a vigorously baroque account of an Egyptian expedition to Ethiopia. Her purpose throughout seems to be twofold: to display, almost as a cinema might, what must, for all the traditional exaggerations, have been one of the great epics of history; and to trace (Freud's last book was probably an influence here) the slow distortion of character that turned Moses from a democratic leader into a holy priest-king, the creator of the Chosen People. It is an ambitious theme, and it would be too much to say that Miss Simon has entirely succeeded in it. She is at her best in the panoramic set-piece, and some of her passages—the spoiling of the Egyptians; the crossing of the Red Sea—are not unfavourably reminiscent of Flaubert. Plainly, she is well-read in her subject and, with certain minor exceptions her background is full and convincing. The psychological studies of Moses and his companions are not so effective, and in her endeavour to miss no aspect of her hero's development, the author is apt to become overtangled in subtleties. Nevertheless, *The Chosen* is a first novel of quite exceptional power and originality, by an author who shows every promise of having a distinguished future in front of her.

A writer less conscientious than Miss Sprigge might have given this story of the Empress Elizabeth of Austria an index, a few dates, and some illustrations, and have published it as a fifteen-shilling biography, for it is a novel only by virtue (or vice) of these omissions. Only an historian of the period could pass a proper judgment on the matter of *The Raven's Wing*; the best an amateur can do is to say that the history appears to be substantially correct, and that the difficult relations between Elizabeth and Franz Josef are shown with the discreet insight of an honest biographer suffering from a lack of material. Stylistically, the book is graceful, gentle and written with the sensibility that, despite the heady romanticism of the time and place it describes, never lapses into sentimentality. *The Raven's Wing* is, to force an image, a sort of hippogryph which the wings of fiction strive unsuccessfully to pull off the ground of fact. In other words, the facts prevent it from being a good novel, and the fancies hinder it from being reliable history. It is, to revert to the hippogryph, a pleasant hybrid that doesn't come off.

Mr. Bunting and *Sons of the Others* are histories, social and military respectively, of our own time. *Mr. Bunting* tells in close but fascinating detail the daily life of a worried little middle-aged surburbanite with a discontented family. Mr. Bunting loses his job, quarrels with his sons, economises pettily, makes everything come right in the end. Mr. Greenwood's characters are individualised types rather than individuals, and his novel is less a study of unique personalities than a piece of mass-observed anthropology. Because it is an honest, acute, quite unpretentious picture of an important layer of society, the book makes unexpectedly interesting reading without requiring any mental or other effort. Put it, rather far down, on the same shelf as your Galsworthy and your *Point Counter Point*. *Sons of the Others* succeeds *This Nettle Danger* (48th thous.) and *Broken Pledges* (38th thous.) and proves once more that Mr. Gibbs is always first with the news. It describes the months when the B.E.F. sat in France waiting for Hitler to miss the 'bus, and is written in a style that admirably conveys the intolerable boredom of the time. Mr. Gibbs writes to specification, so that all his Frenchmen repeatedly say "amusing," all his gentlemen have been to Charterhouse, and all his German aircraft are described, sooner or later, as black bats. *Best Sentence:* "Ginette had been very kind that evening in the cow-shed." *Average Sentence* (spoken by an infantry subaltern in the middle of a battle): "As for their bombing aeroplanes, there's no respite. They darken the skies, although our boys of the R.A.F. are doing great work, I must say." *Worst Sentence:* —but no; who am I to be less kind than Ginette?

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INDIA IN THE WAR

Enlist India for Freedom. By EDWARD THOMPSON. *Gollancz.* 2s. 6d.

The indifference of English public opinion to the problems of India is one of the baffling mysteries of our national psychology. Deep at the roots of every Englishman's pride in his country and himself lies a consciousness of India, yet few care to hear about her affairs. In so far as this neglect is due to ignorance, it is now inexcusable. From the Indian standpoint there is Mr. Shelvankar's "Penguin" book, as vivid a sketch of the permanent background of Indian politics as one could desire. And now from the English standpoint Mr. Edward Thompson has written a "Victory" book which should serve as an indispensable guide to the urgent issues of the hour. Very adroitly Mr. Thompson has divined what the untravelled Englishman needs in order to form an opinion on the decision that we must take at once. Here is the minimum that one must know about recent history, about the structure and standing of Congress and the Muslim League, about the Princes and the Constitutional tangle and, above all, about the feud that divides the two chief religious communities. It is done with lucidity and authority, for among the few Englishmen who write well on India, his knowledge and scholarship are as outstanding as his instinct for justice and his sympathetic insight.

The problem of the moment centres in the guardianship we have assumed over various minorities and interests. The latest offer of the present Government was that Indians shall work out their own Dominion Constitution immediately after the war, while we reserve to ourselves the last word over these minorities and defence. But this offer was vitiated by the condition that no considerable minority shall

be required or coerced to accept a form of government it dislikes. This was in effect to give the Muslim League and the Princes a veto over the future federal constitution. Too scrupulous to coerce a minority, we may soon find ourselves coercing the majority—as we have done before. The impasse lies in the simple fact that the extremer Muslims, because they are a minority, will not accept any democratic constitution for a united India. Mr. Thompson is probably right when he refuses to believe that the Muslims seriously desire separation in an Ulster of their own. This is Mr. Jinnah's device for obstructing any advance. He prefers the influence that comes to him as the leader of a privileged minority. Mr. Thompson's blunt verdict that the Muslims need no protection is as sound as his reminder that we have done literally nothing to help our more recent clients, the Untouchables. For the Princes, on the other hand, we do far too much. Our reliance on these minorities is a sign of the decadence of capitalist imperialism in India. It is no longer a progressive force, and therefore it bases itself on the gaudy anachronism of the Princes' States, and on the more reactionary section of the relatively backward Muslim community. But as Mr. Thompson points out, Mr. Jinnah's League can claim to represent only a fraction of Muslim opinion—as this reviewer reckons, hardly one-sixteenth of the whole Indian electorate.

The invaluable part of this book is in its expository chapters. The constructive part at the end might well, on Mr. Thompson's premises, have been rather bolder. If in principle we really do mean to give India national self-government, we should begin to do it now. To "expand" the Viceroy's Council is not enough. It can be made in fact, though not in form or law, a responsible Cabinet. Among the best things in the book is the reminder that outside this island, and especially in America, our "imperialism" is judged by its Indian record. H. N. BRAILSFORD

"MANY INVENTIONS"

The Judicious Marriage of Mr. Hooker. By C. J. SISSON. *Cambridge University Press.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Everybody knows the story of Hooker's marriage. Along with Xanthippe, Mrs. Hooker is the very type of the ill-assorted wife of a great and good man—the woman who puts to the test the self-restraint of the philosopher and the piety of the saint. She is "the continual dropping on a very rainy day" of the author of *Proverbs*, and Walton's charming biography has made her immortal. "The marriage," says Dean Church, "was probably mistaken," due perhaps to "coarse scheming in a mother-in-law and credulous simplicity in a son-in-law."

And now we learn that the whole story has not a word of truth in it from beginning to end. In a masterpiece of learning and research, Professor Sisson has demolished it for ever. Hooker died in 1600, and in 1613 there was a lawsuit between his daughters and Sir Edwin Sandys, who had paid for the publication of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*, as to the respective rights of Sandys and the daughters to some of the profits of the work. Full reports of this case are extant, and have been studied with the utmost care by Professor Sisson. Besides this, many other documents remain, which clearly prove the honourable character of John Churchman, the father of Hooker's wife, Joan, the much less honourable character of Edward Nethersole, Joan's second husband, and the more than probable wifely virtues of Joan herself. The aspersions on Joan seem to have come primarily from hostile parties in these suits, and to have deluded the simple mind of Walton.

But this is far from all that Professor Sisson has achieved. It is well known that Hooker

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published the fifth book in 1597, and that the remaining three books were left in an unfinished state. Around these books, as we now have them, has raged a controversy like that between Libertarians and Determinists. It will probably never be quite settled; but Professor Sisson makes it likely that the Laudian party in the Church, finding in them concessions to the opposite theory which did not suit them, altered much and omitted more.

Hooker's great book has possibly lost some of its compelling interest as a theological and political manifesto, though it can never lose its place as a monument of magnificent English; and anything that concerns either the work or its author will attract lovers of literature. Those, again, who wish to learn how, in Elizabethan times, books were printed and published, or how they were prepared for the press, will find here much to enlighten them. A most complete and excellent index will aid them in their search.

E. E. KELLETT

EGO, BUT WHAT ABOUT ID?

Ego 4. Yet More of the Autobiography of James Agate. *Harrap.* 18*s.*

Dipper's book; first-rate bounce, less pages, but otherwise as before. Eighteen shillings seems rather much for—But what do I care, who have to hurry on with my own *Id*, now in its two hundred and eighty-seventh volume, to catch the autumn season?

Thursday. Full day. Watched Tim feeding the goats, drained a beaker, and then had in the photographer to take me in bed wearing tights and a balaclava helmet. He didn't seem surprised. "Quite a lot of gentlemen," he assured me, "enjoy these little fancies." Still, it should give my readers something to think about.

Wrote from 10 till 12 for the *Daily Mail*, *Tatler*, *Manchester Guardian*, *News of the World*, *Shopping News* and *Elks' Comet*, scenting out the *article juste*, pacing it to and fro, rolling it round the room, look you, with a furibundity Flaubert never knew. Began dictating in the box-room and finished up in the larder, where Tim (who is taking this down) found two lobsters and a pint of Pommery.

There have been complaints, he said, from neighbours about the goats. Well, what about Mrs. Ames and her "dear little voles"? A sanitary inspector who peered in at the letter-box saw them sitting round in thousands. My goats! And the Islington Show on Monday.

2–5. Added 10,000 words to *Id*, corrected proofs of my *Pewter Book of English Patter*, translated a Rimbaud sonnet into journalese, read and reviewed fifteen novels, re-read *Pickwick* backwards, dipped into Bacon and George Augustus Sala, touched up obituary for poor Fluky Flashman. In the middle of all this, I amused myself by throwing off a lyric about the kicky-wickies and punks of Paddington, but something must have gone wrong, for I seem to have swallowed it.

6–Midnight. Motored to Blackpool for the sunset, and back. Read Stevenson by cigar-light. "Over the hills and far away," I was chanting to myself as we slid through the purlieus of Wimbledon. Quoted this in a loud voice as we walked into the Café Royal; I have't in my gizzard that the young don't approve of R. L. S.

2 a.m.–5 a.m. Sat up with Percy Podge talking about Death and swapping dirty stories. These last I shall translate into French for my next volume of *Id*.

Percy complained that I have got into the habit of talking too loud. I pointed out that this was only in restaurants and theatre lobbies when there were possible strangers. At home I'll flute you like any rhinoceros.

5.10 a.m. Bed. Before going to sleep, worked out that my billiards total for 1939 was 600,092; which is 121 less than last year, but 6 more than the year before. Satisfactory?

Friday. Noises again last night, which I have always put down to my indigestion. But Tim says there's a war on and we're being bombed. Must find out about this.

Lunch with Bertie Van Tromp, Willy Hardcastle (of the *Welkin*), Prince Monolulu, and Humbold Monkey the poet. Humbold, shy and willing as ever, recited a new poem:

> She was so white a thing
> She was so light a thing
> With her beautiful body, and the tenuous grace
> Of her sinuous face.

This, I take it, is great literature. "To my White Mouse." Twenty verses or so, spoken with a sweet deliberation, which lasted us well into the dessert, and interrupted only by Bertie Van T. who cracked walnuts.

Asked about war, but they hadn't heard.

Sunday. Introduced to Pirandello, Lord Halifax and La Garbo at the Dorchester. With each (separately) I tried my usual gambit: "Who are your favourite ten musicians?" La Garbo said Tchaikovsky and then stopped; the others didn't seem to know. My other quiz: "How many children had Mrs. Gummidge?" I am keeping for the Spring.

Noises worse than ever last night. Must ask Tim to ring up Selfridge's Bureau.

Monday. Here's excitement indeed! I have found the way of writing in my sleep! Twenty pages of *Id* reeled off, with scarce a smudge, before I woke! And how is it done? By pecking and preying, by feasting, by cocking snooks over footlights, though I would have you know that I am none of your hopping magpies. All I have to do now is to change this sleep-writing to *dictation*. But I must expect rebellion from Tim.

Selfridge's confirm that there is a war, several months gone. Saville Row and Ascot and Madame Tussaud's bombed: pure Wells. Can't make up my mind whether to go to the Cheddar Caves or take up residence at my publisher's, working overtime; but decide in the end on the latter. In any case, this shan't interfere with my annual holiday at Wapping, or taking my goats to Islington (this afternoon, by the way!), with my bibelots, my bumpers, my collection of famous gloves. It's the duty, I hold, of everyone now to be himself.

Then, what about *Id*? Shall I be allowed to reach the 1,001 volumes I demand? Am I really a cut above Pepys? Above Marcel and Jean Jacques and all of them? What about my exquisitely loaded *dimanches*? Shall I have to start quoting Czech? These are questions I leave regretfully for the next volume of *Id*.

G. W. STONIER

WAR AND REVOLUTION

War by Revolution. By FRANCIS WILLIAMS. *Routledge.* 5*s.*

Where Do We Go From Here? By HAROLD J. LASKI. *Penguin Special.* 6*d.*

Why France Fell: The Lesson For Us. *Union of Democratic Control.* 6*d.*

While the war between governments becomes increasingly a monstrous alignment between two great imperial blocs, there is progressively an understanding amongst the more clear-sighted people that its underlying issue is the common man's fight against exploitation. This revolutionary war goes on and must go on; it will continue in one way or another long after the national air battles are over. Millions, who know that mere military victory will not guarantee either intellectual or economic freedom, support this war because they see that Hitler's

victory will certainly lead to slavery, while a victory of the democratic Powers is unthinkable without a popular revolt against Fascism on the Continent.

The thesis of the revolutionary aim was first clearly stated in Federal Union's pamphlet called *How We Shall Win* and in Scipio's 100,000,000 *Allies, If We Choose* (Gollancz, 2s. 6d.)—a book that has run into three editions. Elaborating a similar thesis with great vigour, Mr. Francis Williams argues that the democratic idea is no temporary product of a particular stage of economic evolution, but the essential theme of human progress. He offers the clearest warning of what will happen to us if we fall into the French state of mind and believe that we can win without a belief in any cause that transcends national survival. The Social Democratic case has seldom been stated with more energy; Mr. Williams believes in democracy not as the lesser of various evils but as our fathers believed in it. It is to him the only philosophy which offers the individual hope, and he does not doubt that Socialism is an extension and not a repudiation of the democratic idea.

The French example is elaborated in a sixpenny pamphlet published by the Union of Democratic Control entitled *Why France Fell*. This pamphlet is written with intimate knowledge of France, and the conclusion is unusually outspoken in its analysis of the danger of potential Pétains here. Like Mr. Francis Williams, the author of this useful pamphlet can see no meaning in this war unless it means the overthrow of Fascism everywhere and not merely the victory of the plutocratic democracies over the Fascist Axis.

Professor Laski has never written with more brilliance than in *Where Do We Go From Here?* His conclusion is the same as that of Mr. Williams and the weakness the same too—that the technique of organising the revolutionary war is by no means obvious at this stage even if our authorities were fully converted to the need of co-operating with people who have no old school ties and who may develop their revolutions on lines which do not square with the ideas of the British ruling class. Mr. Laski's outlook differs from that of Mr. Williams in one highly important respect. The early part of *Where Do We Go From Here?* is a singularly clear and powerful analysis of the origins and basis of Fascism. Liberty and democracy appear in Mr. Laski's interpretation as far less strongly based on the eternal principles of human nature than they do in *War by Revolution*. In a word, Mr. Laski combines Marxist analysis with a democratic outlook and a belief in democratic values, and he does so with more success and less appearance of tightrope-walking than any other writer I know. Like Mr. Francis Williams, he is sure that this war must be waged as a revolutionary war, and that those who now proclaim themselves revolutionaries may hope to collaborate with Moscow without hitching their whole ideological wagon to the Soviet star.

TOM PAINE

Life and Thought in the Greek and Roman World. By M. CARY AND T. J. HAARHOFF. *Methuen.* 8s. 6d.

It is natural to ask, on seeing the title of this book, "Is there any need for yet another treatise on this well-worn theme?" and the two Professors who are its joint authors show in their preface that they expected the question to be asked. We think, however, that they have answered it satisfactorily. First, there is probably no single book, of manageable size, which covers quite the same ground. Secondly, the subject has not hitherto been treated in quite the same fashion. "The prevailing tendency has been to segregate the Greek and the Roman cultures, and to contrast rather than to compare them." As a matter of fact, from an early time Greek culture influenced Italy, and, when Greece became a part

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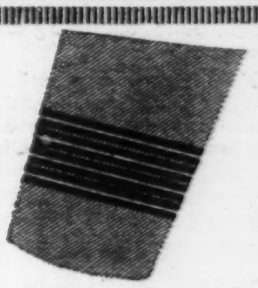

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of the Roman Empire, the result was such a dominance of the one culture by the other as is unparalleled in history: the French literary dominance of Western Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries being but a faint shadow of it. "Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit." This conquest could have been achieved only if there had been some underlying mental sympathy between the two nations; and it is therefore worth while to discuss them together.

Besides this, in a small book thoroughly intelligible to the general reader, it is useful to have, in summary form, some of the results of recent research—for example, the thousands of inscriptions, which only experts can study, need interpretation.

Another very interesting feature, which strikes one as one proceeds, is the illustrations from Afrikaans and other South African languages and customs which Professor Haarhoff provides for us. He must be a popular teacher in his University.

Week-end Competitions

No. 557

Set by G. W. Stonier

Kubla Khan, as everyone knows, was written in an opium-dream after its author had fallen asleep over a copy of *Purches His Pilgrimage*. Competitors are asked to imagine themselves in a similar situation, dozing off with a Telephone Directory in their laps, so that some of the more striking names are carried over into their dreams. The usual prizes are offered for the best poem (limit of 20 lines) composed in these circumstances.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, October 21st.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 555

Set by Thomas Smallbones

Reading in Henry James the other night I came across this sentence: "'I shall go to America,' said Mme. Merle, and then she passed out." Competitors are invited to submit similar instances where a word or a phrase gives the modern reader a second, ludicrous meaning. References should be given and the usual prizes are offered for the best example.

Report by Thomas Smallbones

Poets have suffered more than prose writers—if we may judge from the wide range of entries this week—from the social deterioration of certain words and phrases. "Rude," "ruddy" and "blooming," for example, were favourite poetic adjectives, the latter of which the nineteenth century badly over-used. Many quotations of it from Shelley and Tennyson (e.g., "The bright face of a blooming boy") were sent in; but it is some indication of the woolliness with which romantic poets used their epithets that the results are more often incongruous than funny. The best of the bloomings (sent in, like the above, by Alex Evans) is the Congreve:

> This year has been remarkable two ways,
> For blooming poets and for blasted plays.

Some of the funniest entries were too physiological for inclusion here. Earlier poets are unfortunate if an enlargement of the scatological vernacular has spoiled some of their effects, but I think that Brian Thompson is just when he says, in submitting (not for publication) the first line of Thomas Hardy's *Reminiscences of a Dancing Man*: "It illustrates a limitation of imagination which perhaps prevented Thomas Hardy from being a great poet." And this is borne out by another Hardy quotation submitted by Belshazzar (and alluded to by J. Braddock) from *The Caged Goldfinch*:

> Within a churchyard on a recent grave,
> I saw a little cage
> That jailed a goldfinch. All was silence save
> Its hops from stage to stage.
>
> There was inquiry in its hopeful eye,
> And once it tried to sing;
> Of him or her who placed it there, and why
> No one knew anything.
>
> True a woman was found the day ensuing,
> And some at times averred
> The grave to be her false one's, who when wooing
> Gave her the bird.

The Coleridge quotation about "the fast thick pants" is, of course, a chestnut. A nice variation is quoted by Hetty Stone from Thomas Stanley's translation of Bion's *Lament for Adonis*:

> On barren mountains doth Adonis lie,
> A boar's white tusk hath gored his whiter thigh:
> His short pants Venus grieve . . .

Another popular entry which I find very funny is from *Richard III*:

Queen Eliz.: What stay had I but Edward? And he's gone.
Children: What stay had we but Clarence? And he's gone.
Duchess of York: What stays had I but they? And they are gone.

And in the same vein from Blake's *The Chimney Sweeper* (sent in by Allan Laing and Alex Evans):

> Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,
> They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind.

Allan Laing also sent from Wordsworth's *Gipsies*: "The silent heavens have goings-on" which is a pleasing line even in its slang sense. The biblical "bowels" produce some amusing entries, especially Alpha's extract from one of his Scottish paraphrases:

> He said, and hastened to his home
> To seek his father's love.
> His father sees him from afar
> And all his bowels move.

Guy Innes reminded us of the Blessed Damozel who,

> . . . lean'd out
> From the golden bar of Heaven

and also turned up a pleasant pendant to a recent story of Critic's:

> Is there never a chink in the world above?
> (Love song of Jean Ingebow.)

Two competitors (Alex Evans and Zaza) quoted from Ruskin:

> Why leapest thou,
> Why leapest thou,
> So high within my breast?
> Oh stay thee now,
> Oh stay thee now,
> Thou little bounder, rest.

E. Shepherd produced from Richardson's *Pamela*: "He is bloody passionate. I saw that in the Hall," and the gem from Henry Vaughan:

> How brave a prospect is a bright backside!

Damon, who also spotted this, explains that in Vaughan's sense a backside was a back garden. Of several siren entries the most appropriate was:

> In deep of night, when drowsiness
> Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen I
> To the celestial siren's harmony.
> (Milton—"Arcades.")

Hymns, Ancient and Modern, provided G. Pitt with:

> Sunbeams scorching all the day

which is pure Auden. D. H. R. Brearley discovered this, which has a Beatrice Lillie ring, in Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*:

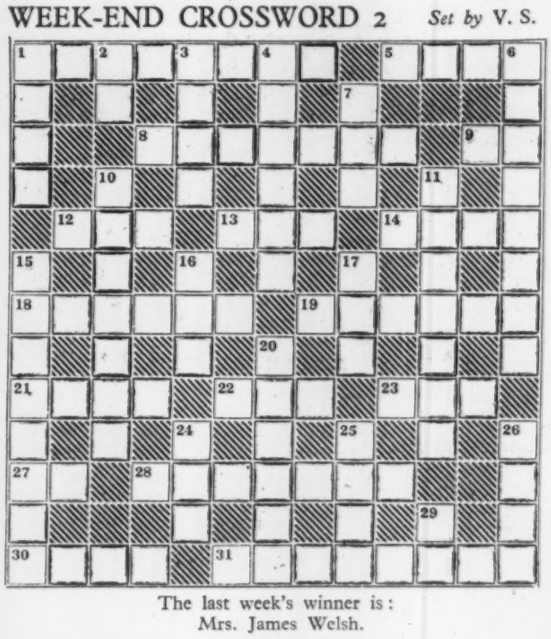
> Ages and ages returning at intervals
> Undestroyed, wandering, immortal,
> Lusty, phallic, with the potent original
> Loins, perfectly sweet.

After some deliberation the second prize goes to G. Pitt for his sunbeams. For the first prize I recommend unhesitatingly Hall Palmer's verse from Francis Thompson, which is beautifully up-to-the-minute:

> DAISY
> Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face
> She gave me tokens three
> A look, a word of her winsome mouth
> And a wild raspberry.

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 2

Set by V. S.



The last week's winner is:
Mrs. James Welsh.

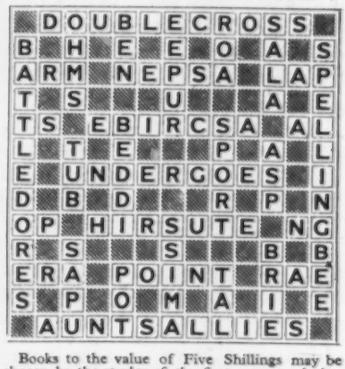
ACROSS

1. A Scotland Yard cipher, Sis. (8).
5. Star turn. (4).
8. Beachcombings? (7).
9. In God's name drop those plates of radishes. (2).
12. It's no good—the fish has turned. (3).
13. August sign. (3).
14. Round as a shilling and really warm. (4).
18. Private Dracula at your service, sir! (6).
19. Nurse is quite one of the family. (6).
21. Only one encore—you'll get the bird. (4).
22. Fish that was bought at the door. (3).
23. See 2 and 16.
27 and 29. Is this book dedicated to the reader? (4).
28. Lamb after highball? One must have been blooming well. (7).
30. Sore back for love of the Circus. (4).
31. Fish fit for a saint, with egg on. (8).

DOWN

1. A fiver! (4).
2 and 11 and 23. Devil a fish for sticking on the spit. (8).
3. Refuse. (4).
4. I'm a long time making reflections. (6).
6. Drab as a gull on a bit of wood. (8).
7. Penny a Princess. (3).
10. Able to fall in a witch's spell. (7).
11. Liberal about a tin of fish. (7).
15. Sailors in the spirit. (8).
16. See 2 and 23, chum. (3).
17. I was swallowed by the pussyfoot as a bit of a delicacy. (3).
20. Care of the little gentleman. (6).
24. Beastly *exemplary* litigant. (3).
25. The mole seems comparatively sanctimonious. (4).
26. A match for sea power? (4).
29. See 27.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," c/o Cornwall Press, Paris Garden, Stamford Street, London, S.E.1.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

THE MARKET RECOVERY ANALYSED—CAPTAIN LYTTELTON AND THE CITY—RHODESIAN COPPER AND AMALGAMATED METAL

THE recovery in the stock markets goes on and has lifted the prices of many ordinary shares to levels at which the institutional investors will be tempted to sell. It is a recovery worth understanding. The firm front which the Stock Exchange maintained throughout the worst bombing of London meant that holders of ordinary shares refused to be frightened by Nazi airmen and were determined to keep their investments for the ultimate victory. As the buildings fell down, building shares actually went up because buyers were attracted to the market by the rosier prospects of the brick and cement industries. This buying movement developed after the Nazi airmen had been defeated by the numerically inferior R.A.F. in several decisive battles for London. But it is not heavy buying. It comes mainly from the provinces, where directors and works managers are steadily increasing their incomes at the expense of the Excess Profits Tax. Market prices responded disproportionately to the buying because jobbers, even if they are not actually short, have no stock of shares on their books and refuse to be pushed into a short position on this recovery. But the war has not yet been won and may be waged for another two years. The professional investors, with the longer memory of market shocks, should therefore begin to let the jobbers have some shares at these higher prices, beginning, I suggest, with the leading brick and cement shares.

* * *

Captain Oliver Lyttelton, the new President of the Board of Trade, is famous, as the City knows, for push and drive. He pushed and drove a wonderful bargain for the Government in September, 1939, when, as Controller of Non-Ferrous Metals, he bought the entire output of the Empire copper, lead and zinc mines for one year at the f.o.b. metal prices ruling at the beginning of the war, with an option to the Government to extend the contract for the remainder of the war, which, of course, it has exercised. If costs of production rise, the fixed contract prices are advanced to cover them (which happened in December last and is due to happen again), but apart from this protection clause the metal producers gave up the benefit of any wartime rise in international prices. The bargain has saved the Government millions of pounds. Captain Lyttelton was able to carry it through because, pre-war, he was one of the managing directors of Amalgamated Metal Corporation, whose constituent companies, British Metal and Henry Gardner, were directly or indirectly controlling practically the entire Empire production of base metals except the copper of International Nickel and that of the Rhodesian producers. International Nickel and Rhokana are, however, represented on the British Metal board, which no doubt helped Captain Lyttelton to bring these producers into line. This base metal bargain is not the only achievement to Captain Lyttelton's credit. It is he who has kept the international tin restriction scheme going in recent years. Seeing that the International Tin Committee contains such opposing producers as Bolivia, which is interested in seeing tin dear, and Malaya, which would like to see tin cheap, there is no doubt that Captain Lyttelton is as good a diplomatist as he is a business bargainer. As President of the Board of Trade he should be able to talk to the capitalist bosses in their own language.

* * *

As a post script to this eulogy I draw attention to the Rhodesian copper shares, which enjoy the sheltered position of being protected against an inflationary rise in costs, if they do not benefit from an inflationary rise in the price of copper. Seeing that output is now at about 140 per cent. of standard, there is no doubt that dividends should be stabilised on the level of 1937–38. Roan Antelope has already restored its final dividend to the 1938 level, making 20 per cent. for the year, and it is reasonable to expect that Rhokana will do the same. Here are the present market prices and yields:

		Present Price	Dividend	Approx. Yield % *
Roan Antelope 5/–	...	13/9 c.d.	20%	£9 13 0
Rhokana £1	...	8	50%	£7 12 0
			if 62½%	£9 10 0

* Allowing for Dominion Income Tax relief.

Perhaps I should add Amalgamated Metal, Captain Lyttelton's old company, to this list of sheltered shares. Amalgamated Metal, apart from its rubber broking business, is now the Government broker for base metals, and after its remuneration for the war period had been submitted to arbitration, the company was able to maintain its old dividend of 7 per cent., in spite of the loss on its holdings of the German Metal Company. Yet the shares have fallen as low as 14*s.* 6*d.* to yield £9 14*s.* 0*d.* per cent. Such a high yield seems to discount Captain Lyttelton's departure from the management.

* * *

Richard Thomas 4 per cent. (second charge) debentures are still quoted as low as 67 to yield 6 per cent., although the interest charge seems well covered for the war. Mr. E. H. Lever, the new chairman, has just addressed a letter to stockholders appealing for peace and confidence. The Control Committee's function, he says, is limited to seeing that the composition of the Board is such that an harmonious and effective direction of the company's affairs is secured. The retired Sir William Firth will liken this remark to Hitler's occupation of the Rumanian oilfields to ensure the harmonious and effective direction of Rumanian oil exports.

Company Meeting

ASPRO LIMITED

MR. G. M. GARCIA'S ADDRESS

THE fifth ordinary general meeting of Aspro Limited was held on Monday in London.

Mr. G. M. Garcia (chairman and managing director) in the course of his speech, said:

A gratifying feature is the enhanced value of our export figures. Everything possible has been done to increase our trade with other countries and the increase over the previous year is 158 per cent.

MEDICINE STAMP DUTY AND PURCHASE TAX

I do not desire to raise any controversial issues but I feel constrained to bring certain facts to your notice.

When Sir John Simon outlined the scheme of the proposed Purchase Tax, the Proprietary Association of Great Britain, a body which includes the principal manufacturers of proprietary medicines and of which I am the Chairman, although in principle averse to any form of taxation of medicines, decided to refrain from participating in any active opposition to the inclusion of medicines in general within the field of the new tax. It was felt that the necessity of adjusting our home economy for the purpose of helping to win the war justified the generality of the new tax. Also we felt that the very definite assurances given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the new charge would not be imposed on articles already subject to a heavy duty, neither would it contain the element of a tax upon a tax, precluded any possibility of the imposition of the very heavy burden of double taxation on many remedies in current use.

Greatly to our surprise this assumption proved to be ill-founded. Although the introduction of the Purchase Tax presented a unique opportunity for a final settlement of the vexed question of Medicine Stamp Duty, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer felt that he could not embark upon a solution of the problem at this juncture, while he acknowledged that the present position is, to quote his own words, "perfectly impossible." This decision was all the more regrettable since the view expressed by the Chancellor himself was endorsed by many Members in the House of Commons, who sensed the injustice of subjecting certain medicines to double taxation and who would have supported him in avoiding this inequity, without inciting any opposition to that issue.

Nevertheless, there are grounds for hope that the question of the taxation of proprietary medicines may yet find a solution in the near future, since Sir Kingsley Wood gave a definite undertaking during the Committee stage of the Finance (No. 2) Bill, 1940, to endeavour, between now and the next Finance Bill, to see whether he could not get the parties together and get some reasonable solution of the matter. On behalf of the members of the Proprietary Association of Great Britain, I take this opportunity of declaring that they are ready to afford every assistance in implementing this undertaking.

The peculiarly inequitable effect of the retention of Medicine Stamp Duty with the super-imposition of Purchase Tax is to impose on a number of useful household remedies in common use, a charge far in excess of that imposed on goods classed as luxuries, and surely medicines cannot be regarded as luxuries. Further, this double taxation gives rise to very serious difficulties, by creating fresh anomalies in the retailing of these articles, and your directors have been confronted by many new and unexpected problems in making adjustments to meet the new conditions.

In this connection, the solid foundation upon which the reputation of Aspro is now firmly established is an asset of inestimable value.

OVERSEAS SALES

Reference has already been made to the gratifying expansion in the exports of Aspro. I would mention that since the outbreak of the war, in my capacity as a member of the Proprietary Articles Committee of the Export Licensing Board, and in promoting the formation of an Export Group for Proprietary Medicines in the Export Council, I have stressed the imperative necessity of developing our national export trade in medicines on an organised basis. Increased exports of the valuable products of this branch of our national industry are required not only to supplant products of enemy origin in every available market and as a material contribution towards the successful prosecution of the war, but also as a means of enhancing the prestige of British products in this field. I am glad to be able to state that this aim is being realised, as is evidenced by the progressive increase in the volume of our exports of medicinal products.

During the hostilities in Finland and following the disastrous earthquakes in Turkey, large consignments of Aspro were sent as donations to alleviate the sufferings of victims in both of these countries.

Some months ago we examined the plant in our workshop and found that some of the machinery could be utilised to greater national advantage by undertakings engaged in manufacturing machine tools for the aircraft industry. I am sure that the directors' decision to hand this machinery over to a manufacturing concern so engaged will meet with your wholehearted approval.

We have also been able to adapt some of our remaining plant for national purposes in connection with the manufacture of an important armament piece.

We have encouraged the formation of a National Savings Group among our employees—and this has met with enthusiastic support.

In accordance with the desire of the authorities, we have helped in a practical way to increase the production of foodstuffs. We have a substantial acreage under cultivation, and apart from providing foodstuffs for the members of our staff, we have been able to make numerous gifts in kind to hospitals and others.

In spite of the difficulties the welfare activities of our Company are still very much to the fore. Our staff have provided concerts and theatrical entertainments for the troops, and there is a full programme in contemplation for the forthcoming year.

I would like once again to stress our appreciation of their efforts to our loyal and efficient staff, who though seriously depleted by the call of the Services, continue to give that high standard of service of which we are so proud.

The report was unanimously adopted.